STEPS TO PERFECTION

An Islamic Curriculum For Youth

GRADE

9

Under the Guidance of

MOULANA NABI R. MIR (ABIDI)

AL-KISA FOUNDATION

UNDER THE CLOAK OF GUIDANCE AND MERCY

SABA

STEPS TO PERFECTION

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2024908364

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Kisa Publications
4415 Fortran Court
San Jose, CA 95134

www.alkisafoundation.org
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the beloved Imām of our time عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. May Allah ﷻ hasten his reappearance and help us to become his true companions.

Acknowledgments

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ:

"*On the Day of Resurrection, the ink of the scholars will be weighed up against the blood of the martyrs, and the ink of the scholars will be heavier than the blood of the martyrs.*"

(*Nahj al-Faṣāḥah*, Saying #3222)

We are especially thankful to the Kisa Australia Team, Kisa Mission Team, Shaykh Salim Yusufali, Shaykh Ehsan Ahmadi, Dr. Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, Srs. Urooj Kazmi, Samina Ali, Bhavani Ali, Sabika Mithani, Arifa Hudda, Fatima Falahati, Zahra Sabur, Liliana Villalvazo, Amna Hussain, Fatima Hussain, Zahra Eslami, Fathema Abidi, Zehra Abbas, Maryam Hakimpanah, Maryam Ershad, Zahra Memar, Rabab Jafri, Maria Al-Janabi, Shamama Zehra, Irum Abbas, Marwa Kachmar, Nida Syed, Zainab Hussain, Anjum Afzal, Sarah Silvaggi, Mina Mozaffarian, Aliya Dhanjy, Lina Dewjee, Sumiya Baqri, Sahar Zaidi, Yamna Jafri, Sana Abbas, Wajma Ahad, Rumina Hashmani, Maliha Abdi, Sakina Abdallah, Tasneem Hudda, Tahseen Shariff, Noor Nasrallah, Hanan Wazne, Swaleha Virjee, Farhana Mohamedali, Houra Khalife, Julie Karaki, Brs. Taymaz Tabrizi, Ali Alsamail, Abidali Mohamedali, Mohammad Abbas Virjee, Mohammad Hendijanifard, Mohamedtufayl Mohamedali, the Tabatabai family, all the illustrators who allowed us to use their illustrations, SABA, SABA Sunday School Team, RISE Academy, Kisa Kids syllabus committees, teachers, and staff for their support and assistance in the development and testing of the curriculum.

SABA and Al-Kisa Foundation are also very thankful to the Islamic organizations and schools of Ahlul Bayt at London-Stanmore, London-Hujjat, Vancouver, Minnesota, Toronto, and all others whose syllabus and books were used for the inspiration and creation of this curriculum.

Please remember all the people involved in this project in your prayers.

Authors and Editors: Dr. Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi) and Curriculum Committee

We pray to Allah to give us the strength and tawfīq to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With duʿās,

Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Transliteration Chart

Arabic terms in this book have been transliterated according to the following guidelines*:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)	ص	ṣ
ء	ʾ(medial or final form)	ض	ḍ
ا	a	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	ʿ
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	و	w
ش	sh	ي	y

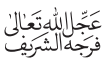
ـَ	a	آ / ـَا / ىٰ	ā
ـِ	i	ـِي	ī
ـُ	u	ـُو	ū
ـّ	double letter		

*Please note that due to limitations, the transliteration is not 100% accurate in capturing *tajwīd* rules.

Please Note: The *sukūn* or *sākin* generally has two shapes, ۠ and ۡ which are both pronounced the same. For the purposes of this material, the ۠ has been used.

Symbol Usage

Throughout this work, when taking the name of any of the revered personalities in Islamic history, including Allah ﷻ, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his select family members, and religious scholars, we have employed the following Arabic symbols to show the reverence to each of them. As a part of Islamic culture, readers are requested to send the salutations upon these personalities when they read this work.

	All glory belongs to Allah, the Glorified and Exalted Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)
	Mighty and Majestic (is He) Used exclusively for God (Allah ﷻ)
	Blessings of Allah be upon him and his Immaculate Progeny Used exclusively for Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ
	Peace be upon him Used for one honored male
	Peace be upon all of them Used for three or more honored men or women or a combination
	Peace be upon her Used for one honored female
	*May Allah, the All-High, hasten his noble return* Used exclusively for Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف
	May his spirit be sanctified Used for religious scholars

Preface and Introduction by Moulana Nabi Raza Mir (Abidi)

Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Islamic Center

Salāmun ʿalaykum

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

ن ۚ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

"Nūn! [I swear] by the pen and what they inscribe!" [1]

All praise is for Allah ﷻ, the Lord and Nurturer of the worlds. It is an honor and pleasure to address you: dear teachers, administrators, educators, and parents. This verse of the Qurʾān demonstrates the sanctity of writing. When Allah ﷻ takes an oath by those who write and that which has been written, it clearly demonstrates the lofty status of writing and books. If we do a proper job in actualizing the potential of this medium, then Allah ﷻ guarantees us a high position. We know that Islam places a lot of emphasis on education as a whole.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ has a beautiful narration where he says:

أَوَّلُ الدِّينِ مَعْرِفَتُهُ، وَكَمَالُ مَعْرِفَتِهِ التَّصْدِيقُ بِهِ، وَكَمَالُ التَّصْدِيقِ بِهِ تَوْحِيدُهُ، وَكَمَالُ تَوْحِيدِهِ الاخْلاصُ لَهُ، وَكَمَالُ الاخْلاصِ لَهُ نَفْيُ الصِّفَاتِ عَنْهُ، لِشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ صِفَة أَنَّها غَيْرُ المَوْصُوفِ، وَشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ مَوْصُوف أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ الصِّفَةِ....

"The first thing in religion is the recognition of Him (Allah); and the perfection of recognizing Him is to witness Him; and the perfection of witnessing Him is to believe in His Oneness; and the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him as Pure; and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed, and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute…" [2]

Here, the Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-Muʾminīn ؑ) is demonstrating the importance of instilling systematic knowledge *(ʿilm)* and a deeper recognition and cognizance *(maʿrifah)* into our children, especially our youth. The Imām ؑ indicates that complete and perfect *maʿrifah* can only be reached by learning and grasping the true concept of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd),* and the beliefs that stem from it from a young age.

Human beings love beauty and goodness innately, and because Allah ﷻ is perfect Beauty, and Islam, the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ are the manifestations of Allah's Beauty, when we find the knowledge and deeper recognition of this beauty, we will automatically be drawn to it, and it will blossom in our hearts. Similarly, if we can achieve this for our youth, then they will automatically be drawn to it, and will be able to truly connect with their faith, and become ambassadors of Islam, the Qurʾān, and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ. It will also cultivate within them a drive and passion to fulfill their roles and responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qalam (68), Verse 1.
2 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 1.

It goes without saying of course, that this knowledge must be from the correct sources, comprehensive in nature, and have topics that are relevant for the guidance of our youth—particularly for issues and challenges that they face on a daily basis. The knowledge that our youth acquire should be foundational and a precursor to improve, learn further, and build a love for Islam and the Qurʾān within themselves.

After delving further, we find that this education can be obtained in two formats: informal and formal. Informal education entails formats such as speeches, classes, discussions, and a teacher's interactions within a classroom. Formal education refers to the standards and guidelines that teachers follow when teaching, commonly referred to as the curriculum. While both forms of education are integral to the learning process, a cohesive curriculum is crucial in ensuring that the deliverance of education is done so in an organized and logical sequence.

Additionally, as we know, Islam is a **complete** way of life. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"Say: 'Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, Lord (and Nurturer) of the worlds.'" [3]

In an ideal world, our education system would be all-encompassing. However, this is difficult to implement due to various limitations and circumstances. For example, even full-time Islamic schools generally only allocate a few hours a week for Islamic studies. Similarly, weekend schools only operate for a few hours once a week, at most for about 30-34 weeks during the year. Therefore, weekend schools and full-time Islamic schools overall do not have the capacity to adopt a completely integrated system for our children to learn Islam in conjunction with other necessary subjects. As a result, most schools focus on these five Islamic subjects: Qurʾān, *ʿAqāʾid* (Beliefs), *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), History, and *Akhlāq* (Morals and Etiquettes). It is with this in mind that we are honored to compile and develop a Pre-K to Grade 12 Curriculum for Islamic Studies and Qurʾān, as well as for life skills and contemporary issues related to our daily lives.

Alḥamdulillāh, Al-Kisa Foundation is pleased to present the Islamic Studies Curriculum, which focuses on four core subjects: *ʿAqāʾid*, *Fiqh*, History, and *Akhlāq*. Inshāʾallāh, we hope to further develop the fifth core subject, Qurʾān, in areas such as *Tajwīd* (rules related to recitation), *Mafāhīm* (understanding), and *Tafsīr* (commentary and deeper understanding). The journey to create this Curriculum started over 20 years ago, but the true emphasis and efforts were over the last 6 years where we piloted the lessons, and got feedback from the community. At this time, the Pre-K to Grade 6 Curriculum has undergone many iterations and revisions to the extent that it has reached a satisfactory level.

Alḥamdulillāh, the Grade 7-12 Curriculum has reached some great milestones with your *duʿās*. Having been piloted for a few years to test the content, incorporate feedback, many editings, etc., with the blessings of Allah ﷻ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, it is now being printed professionally. This Curriculum is a compilation of different resources, both existing and new, based on input from various individuals and institutions. As a result, some of the books or lessons are quite large, and it is at the discretion of the teacher to skip certain lessons if need be, since extra material was added as additional resources. Although we had initially created a scope and sequence, and planned to fully develop the lessons ourselves, we ran into some unforeseen hurdles with the COVID-19 Pandemic, but have been able to overcome those by the blessings of the Almighty.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 162.

A more detailed overview on how this Curriculum was developed is outlined below.

METHODS USED TO COMPILE THIS CURRICULUM

1. As with all projects under Al-Kisa Foundation, the curriculum was guided by scholars, educators, and the Kisa mission team.

2. Several resources were used in collaboration with other developers, including, but not limited to, madrasah.net, the Kawther Learning Center Team, the Islamic Syllabus Team, the Sirat Curriculum Team, as well as books of great scholars like Shahīd Motahhari, Āyatullāh Ja'far Sobhani, etc.

3. The first step was identifying the challenges faced by youth and creating a scope and sequence of this information by organizing it into five categories: ʿaqāʾid, fiqh, history, akhlāq, and contemporary issues. After this, we designed 64 lessons in order to fit the average Sunday school schedule, also bearing in mind that the material could be expanded further for a full-time school.

4. Next, each lesson was given guiding points by myself or other scholars to guide the outcome and method of each lesson.

5. Each lesson was then written by an educator, reviewed once again by a scholar to verify the content, and finally given back to an educator to create worksheets, etc.

6. This would finalize the content portion of the lesson, after which the graphics team would create the layout and graphics for each.

7. Of course, this was a monumental task with many individuals involved, all of which was tracked using a project management software.

Once the final review was done by myself, the curriculum, along with supporting slides, activities, and games, was published online on our Salam Online website (www.salamonline.education) for the benefit of others. I am humbled to be a part of this process, and am very aware that despite our best efforts, there is lots of room for improvement. I humbly ask all of the parents, educators, students, school administrators, and others who utilize this curriculum to please bless us with your constructive feedback, criticism, suggestions, and comments. After all, only the Qurʾān is free from all defects and mistakes!

Additionally, please do consider sharing your resources with us so that we can possibly incorporate them into the curriculum and enhance it inshāʾAllāh. We are interested in any teaching methodologies, supplemental curriculum, or additional resources used. Digital resources, such as presentations, games, and quizzes, are also appreciated and can be shared with **admin@alkisafoundation.org**. Jazākallāhu khayran!

We hope that you and your children enjoy this Curriculum, and that it is beneficial to the community at large, inshāʾAllāh. Please do remember us in your *duʿās,* and provide us with any feedback so that we can make future improvements. We look forward to hearing from you.

We pray to Allah ﷻ to give us the strength and the Divine providence and ability *(tawfīq)* to perform our duties and responsibilities.

With Duʿās,
Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

About the Board ʿĀlim

Moulana Nabi R. Mir (Abidi) is a scholar, an educator, a father, and an enthusiast for creating educational infrastructure and Islamic resources for the benefit of the global community. He is a pioneer of always thinking "outside of the box" by supporting the creation of innovative materials to engage young readers to pick up Islamic books, interact with Qurʾānic games, learn from the Steps to Perfection Curriculum, and begin their life-long journey of holistic education.

Being a dedicated student and graduate of *Darse Khārij* from the *Ḥawzah* (the highest level of Islamic Studies in the seminary), Moulana Abidi understands the intrinsic value of Islamic education. Also, having grown up in India, and now residing in the United States, he has had the honor of traveling to various communities and meeting many community leaders. He values the importance of collaboration and working together to optimize our communal potential and create open source platforms so that information and resources are available and accessible to everyone around the world.

You, dear reader, are now part of the Al-Kisa family.
Share the word, and join the mission.

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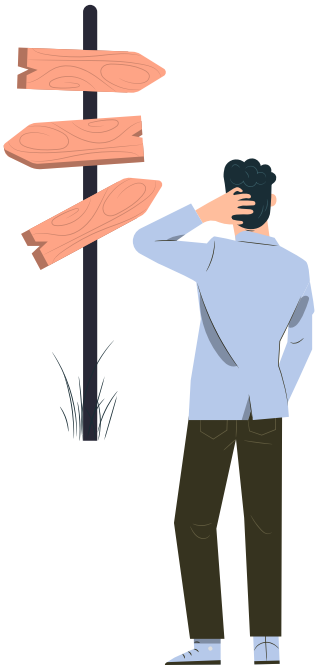

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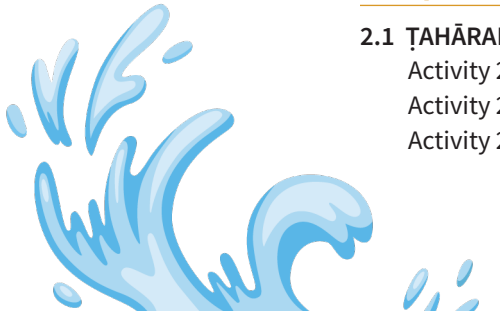

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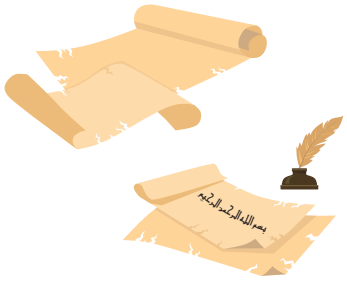

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ʿAQĀʾID
(BELIEFS)

CHAPTER 1

Religion and People

1.1 Potential Harms of Not Investigating Religion

1.2 Potential Benefits of Investigating Religion

1.3 Why People Turn Away from Religion

1.4 Religion is Not a Tool

1.5 Origins of Religion

1.6 Worldviews

1.1 Potential Harms of Not Investigating Religion

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

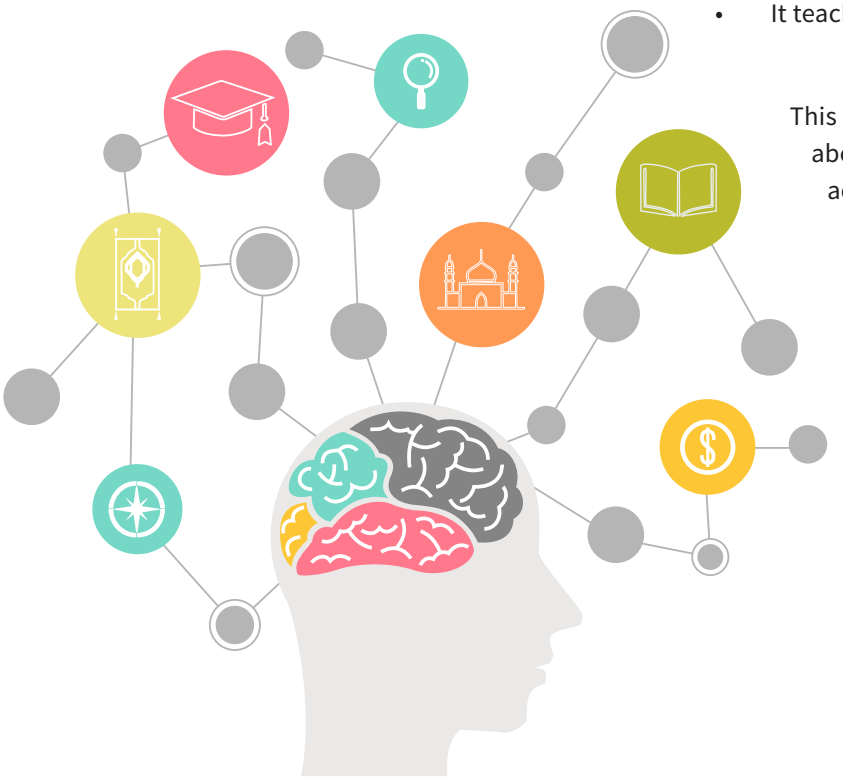
- Define potential harms, and give examples of different levels of potential and different types of harms.
- Explain the intuitive need to investigate given the possibility of potential harms.
- Relate the concept of potential harms with the need to investigate religion.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think of a time when you investigated and avoided a potential danger in your life. What were the specific factors that led you to the decision of avoiding it?

IMPORTANCE OF THIS SUBJECT

All knowledge—when learned for the right reasons and used in the right way—are a source of goodness. However, the knowledge of *ʿAqāʾid*, or the Fundamental Beliefs of Islam (learning about Allah ﷻ, His religion, how to worship Him, the Divine Book He sent, and the people He sent to guide us) is at a much higher level because:

- It can help someone, not only in this temporary world, but more so in the Hereafter.
- The importance of knowledge can be divided into two categories:
  - ▷ Knowledge that people can live without because it does not really play a fundamental role in their success in this world or the next.
  - ▷ Knowledge that people cannot live without because it plays a fundamental role in their success in this world and the next. The knowledge of *ʿAqāʾid* (Fundamental Beliefs of Islam) falls into this category.
    - It can provide a reason for learning about other things as well.
    - It teaches you **why** and **how** you should live.



This lesson will explore the need to investigate further about religion, and understand the harms of not acquiring such necessary information.

DIALOGUE WITH JORDAN

ATHEIST:

Someone who rejects the idea of any God or religion. This is different from an agnostic, who is someone who does not know if God exists or not.

One day, you are walking around your school campus. You meet someone who asks you if you are a Muslim. They tell you that although they are an atheist, they are eager to explore and understand diverse perspectives on the fundamentals of religion.

ME: "Well, if you ever want to, let's sit down and have a discussion about religion and God."

He introduces himself as Jordan when he is ready to dive into the discussion on religion.

JORDAN: "I am very open to learning about your perspective on religion, but before we even begin, I'm curious about why religious people are always insisting on others investigating or learning about religion? Like what's the big deal? WHY SHOULD I EVEN CARE?"

ME: "There is a basic principle that any logical person must adhere to: Investigate and learn to avoid any potential dangers that may exist. For example, when you sense the signs of a fire—like a burning smell, heat or smoke, or the sounds of an alarm or fire truck—then **you must investigate even without having seen an actual fire**. If someone tells you that you have a deadly insect crawling up your neck, then you will look into it because of the potential danger involved, even though you may not have seen the insect just yet.

With religion, throughout history, 124,000 people [whom Muslims consider to be Prophets ﷺ] warned their societies of a great danger. These were people who were generally respected in their societies and known to be truthful. They all had the same basic message: Worship One God, and follow a set of rules and regulations sent down by God to be successful, or else you will face eternal misery, pain, and regret.

Here, the "potential" of what they said to be true is high because:

- They were honest and truthful people of society.
- The quantity of people sharing the same message was high—a minimum of 124,000.
- The warning of these people was not limited to a specific time and place, but it was for all of humanity from the beginning of time until the end of this world. It affects all of humankind directly.
- The consequences—if it is the truth—will affect everyone for all of eternity.

At the same time, the potential danger or harm they warned about is also high because:

- It is not just short-lived and related to this world only, but rather it is eternal.
- It affects everyone directly and in a significant way.

Therefore, the need to investigate is extremely high because both the potential and the danger are high."

JORDAN: "So, you are telling me that I should investigate religion because of what was said by people whom you claim to be Prophets? This is a circular argument:

You are telling me that I should investigate what the Prophets said because the Prophets said that I should investigate it. How can I believe what these supposed Prophets said before even investigating religion?"

ME: "Actually, you do not have to believe what the Prophets said to be true—at least not just yet. But you should accept that there could be a **chance** that what they taught was correct. Just like when you smell smoke, there is a **chance** that there might be a fire, and because of the potential danger, you know innately that you **must** investigate, so you take it upon yourself to do so. Here as well, the **possibility** that so many honest and respectable people warned about such a great danger is enough to make it logically **necessary** to investigate it further."

The argument based on potential harm discussed in this lesson has been mentioned in the words of the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Let us read and reflect upon an example of one of these narrations *(aḥādīth)*.

An atheist once came to the 8th Imām, ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ while there was a group of people present. Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said to that man: *"If the matter is as you (the atheists) believe—even though the truth is different than what you believe—then are we and you not the same, meaning that our praying, fasting, charity, and what we believe will not harm us?"* The atheist remained silent.

Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ then continued: *"If however, the matter is as we believe—which in fact it is—then you will lose out, while we will be successful, is this not the case?"*[1]

It is also essential to remember that life in this temporary world is very short-lived, and it is also a test for everyone. The best one to tell us how to live it and prepare for this test is Allah, our Creator.

1 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth # 4899.

STOP AND REFLECT: Take a moment to consider the words of our 8th Imām ﷺ. Do you think this was a logical way to explain the concept, and if so, then how?

Activity 1.1a: Review Questions

1. Give unique examples of some potential harms where:

   a. The potential is low, but the harm is great

   b. The potential is high, but the harm is low

   c. Both the potential and the harm are great

2. In this lesson, the first point mentioned for why the potential is great that Prophets ﷺ existed and were sent down by Allah ﷻ is that all of the Prophets were considered truthful and honest within their societies. Why would the potential have been lower if they had not been? Explain using the concept of Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ being immaculate and free from sins *(maʿṣūm)*.

Activity 1.1a: Review Questions (Continued)

3. A person misses class one day and thinks that there might be an exam the next day. Is it okay to show up to class the next day without investigating? Why or why not? Who will lose out if one does not investigate? How is this related to investigating and caring about religion?

Activity 1.1b: Survey

Complete the survey below by answering the question or responding to the statement. For each response that you provide, write a justification in the space provided below.

1. What may be the biggest potential harm if a person does not investigate religion seriously? Why?

2. Even if there was no life after death, for our life in this world, there are more potential benefits to following a religion than there are harms. Is this true or false? Provide an explanation for your answer.

3. The potential benefits of following a religion are mostly because of the possibility of life after death. Is this true or false? Provide an explanation for your answer.

1.2 Potential Benefits of Investigating Religion

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Logically establish the relative weakness of a human being, and the severity of potential harms.
- Logically establish the need to investigate religion by exploring the benefits in doing so.

JORDAN: "I understand why not investigating religion does not make sense because of the potential harms of suffering eternal misery and regret. Looking at it from the perspective of potential benefit though, what if I do spend time looking into religion and then accept it? I would have to live my life according to many rules and restrictions. In the end there may not even really be an afterlife, and I would have thrown away my one shot at enjoying life in this world."

Is fear of potential harm really the best motivator? People often do not respond to this and think that nothing can really harm them. Is there any other way of convincing someone to investigate religion?

ME: "When we are young and strong we have an illusion of being invincible. Even though we see people around us growing old or dying, we do not take much notice of this. The reality however is that human beings are very weak, and we are all going to have to face death at some point or another. All it can take is a mosquito sting, an ant bite, or even the tiniest bacteria to cause us great pain, discomfort, and even death in some instances.

If a person does not agree that they are in fact susceptible and vulnerable to various different harms, there is still another reason to investigate religion, and that is the **potential benefit** of doing so. Wise people—when they know that there is something which has potential benefit for them—will not ignore investigating this potential, especially when the potential and/or the benefit is high.

For example, you open the door and see a personalized, beautifully lettered envelope with a specially wrapped gift in your name (and you know that it is not a hoax or anything dangerous), then would it be wise or acceptable just to toss it in the garbage because you do not know what is inside of it? Or would it make sense to investigate further by opening up the package?

Another example of potential benefit outweighing potential harm is if someone is diagnosed with a serious illness, possibly a terminal one. In this case, if a doctor were to propose a medication with even the slightest chance of a potential cure—even if there may be some side effects to it—then the patient will most likely try the medication because the benefit of it would be very high and outweighs everything else. All of these examples can be related to this temporary world as well. Religion could provide potential benefits for eternity, even if there are some restrictions and strict guidelines."

Activity 1.2a: Written Reflection

REFLECTION: Upon reading the lesson thus far, what do you think might be some potential benefits to religion?

Below are some benefits of religion. Explain your perspective on why they might be benefits **before** reading the remainder of the lesson.

1. Meaning and purpose to life:

2. Hope and motivation:

3. Solace in times of difficulty:

4. Seeking knowledge:

Now read the next section of this lesson before continuing the activity sheet.

Did your perspectives line up with the details of this lesson? If so, then how?

REFLECTION: Consider a time when one of the above benefits of religion helped you in a time of difficulty. What would be different if this had not been the case?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS?

1. MEANING AND PURPOSE TO LIFE

People who are secular thinkers, or those who do not have a religion, or those who assume that there is nothing after life in this world often struggle to find real purpose in life. Many of these people seem highly motivated and often work very hard to reach certain goals in their lives. But once they reach these goals, we see that most of them are either:

- Not satisfied with what they have achieved and continue to seek higher material goals. This often takes over their entire lives and they end up losing out on important aspects of life such as family, friends, or their health;
- Or they are not satisfied with what they have achieved and completely lose motivation in life, end up depressed, or turn to substance abuse or alcohol, or face other such problems.

STOP AND REFLECT: Lookup and list 5 of the richest people in the world. How many of them have been divorced at least once in their lives? Or have other difficulties that they are going through? What might be some signs of a truly content individual?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Open the top news headlines on your phone or computer. How many are about drug abuse/dependencies, or depression? What do you think their purpose or meaning of life was?

Even if one takes a brief look at the lives of some famous people, it is clear that many celebrities, rich people, CEOs of prominent companies, and others who get everything they initially wanted from this world still do not tend to find true happiness.

Human beings are creatures who in one aspect are immaterial because they have an immaterial soul linked to the Divine Absolute Creator. Therefore, no limited purpose or goal can make them truly happy because they will always want more. So when a rich person gets all they can attain, or a famous person reaches the peak of fame or popularity, they will still have a feeling of emptiness, and an internal void within. This is because the true motivation that was driving them was in fact their innate nature and need to move toward Allah ﷻ.

As a result, our true purpose in life must come from the Creator who is Unlimited and Absolute; and this purpose cannot just end in this world—it has to continue into the Hereafter.

This is also why many people who have religion and truly believe in it are quite happy even though they may have relatively little when it comes to materialistic things. They understand that all their goals and motivations in life are actually a reflection of their natural inclination to move toward Allah ﷻ. When they set a goal in life or have an ambition, they understand this in the context of their journey toward Allah ﷻ.

JORDAN: "If people who do not believe in God do not have a true purpose, then why is it that there are many atheists who do benevolent work like donating to charities, or volunteering to help the poor and needy?"

ME: "All human beings have an innate inclination to help others. Sometimes this nature is overcome by our greed and interest in materialistic things. However, for some people this inclination remains strong despite their not believing in God. This internal inclination is actually part of our innate nature which is Arabic is known as *fiṭrah,* and this includes knowledge of God. So in fact, when such people say they are doing good for "good's sake," they are in fact doing it for "God's sake" without acknowledging this reality."

2. HOPE AND MOTIVATION

Without religion, people might easily give up when they do not find fame or fortune, even though they are trying hard. There may be many scientists, artists, authors, and philanthropists who try very hard in their lives, but do not get any recognition from people for what they do. Sometimes they become famous after they die. However, those who have religion know that whatever they do, Allah ﷻ is aware of it and they will be rewarded for it accordingly. Whether others praise them for their efforts or not, whether they receive awards or not, whether they even see the fruits of their labor or not, with religion a person has motivation to continue and try their hardest because they know that Allah ﷻ sees everything and He will reward everyone for their actions.

One of the clearest examples of those who do good without receiving any recognition in this world is a *Shahīd-e Gumnām* (an unknown martyr). This refers to a person who loses one's life defending religion and is killed in a manner that their body is not even recognisable after their death. Such a person sacrificed everything in the way of Allah ﷻ and no one ever comes to know what they accomplished, except the All-Knowing One.

3. SOLACE IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

Life has its ups and its downs. Almost everyone, at various times in their life, will be tested severely. Without religion, people have very little to turn to. The most they can do is get comfort from others (whose ability to help is usually quite limited), or from things like food, spending money, entertainment, or drugs. People who have religion, on the other hand, have a relationship with a Being who is in charge of the entire universe, including them. For them, facing difficulty is like a billionaire who loses a ten dollar bill, it is not a very big deal because they know they have somewhere to turn to. They also know that there is a life after this world where there will be true accountability.

4. SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

Someone who has religion has a deep incentive to seek knowledge—knowledge about the universe (because they see the universe as an incredibly sophisticated, engaging, rich book of learning about Allah, the All-Perfect Being); and knowledge that goes beyond the physical universe—knowledge about the nature of human beings, the purpose of existence, the perfection of human qualities, and the ultimate destination of human beings, all of which are taught by religion.

JORDAN: "Religion may motivate some people to seek knowledge, but there have been many famous scholars in history who have been lifelong learners despite not being motivated by religion!"

ME: "That is correct, however, religion provides profound depth and perspective to learning that is often lacking in those who are motivated by non-religious purposes such as fame and fortune. In such cases, they may, at times, feel compelled to 'fudge' their data, or present 'new' theories that are actually not new. So in that case, the results of their research are not necessarily as pure and sincere as the results of those who are motivated by religion."

There are others who actually learn for the sake of God, but they lack the awareness that they are doing so.

Example 1: They could be learning for the sake of goodness, but they deny religion for other reasons. In that case, they might just need some time to realize that 'goodness' is another word for God.

Example 2: Sometimes people benefit from some of the teachings of religion even though they do not benefit from all of those teachings. For instance, some people are fascinated by nature and they dedicate their lives to studying it and plunging into the depths of their fascination. Yet they attribute all of its wonder and beauty to an entity they call 'Mother Nature.' They have not had the insight to realize that 'Mother Nature' is a Being who is intelligent, purposeful, orderly, and powerful—meaning that 'Mother Nature' is a pseudonym for God Almighty.

PEACE IN SOCIETY:

Let us take the example of a host who extends an invitation to a group of people to come and stay at their own mansion. When they get there, they see that it is a free-for-all: all you can eat and drink, and enjoy things as you want with no rules or responsibilities, and no one to keep track of what is used or how it is used. Even if you infringe on the rights of others, no one says anything at all. On the other hand, imagine a benign, generous host who invites a group of people to their mansion where they can also partake in many gifts. However, the host is watching carefully over everything, including how it is used. The guests have to follow a code of conduct that involves taking care of others and making sure that their lifestyle does not interfere with other people's enjoyment. Which scenario is better? Someone with a good code of conduct and organized religion will see the second case as being the more lofty choice. This life is not just about trying to maximize our own personal benefit, rather we must see society as a whole.

JORDAN: "That **sounds** good, but the reality is that we live in a society where most people are not religious, or if they are, they follow different religions. So what is the benefit of investigating religion when most of the society is not religious?"

ME: "Society exists as a **microcosm** in both families and communities. People can benefit from religion (if it is truly practiced!) in their families because a truly religious family will be filled with love, peace, justice, and comfort. Similarly, people live in communities (religious, ethnic, and local) where they can benefit from the social teachings of religion. Religion motivates us to work hard toward establishing an ultimate, universal society of justice and peace."

A PATH TOWARD A GOAL:

Religion gives the instructions and teachings that allow a person to achieve a very important goal: ultimate happiness, success, and prosperity in both this world and the next. People who do not have religion can be very confused about what destination they should be aiming at in life and what the path is to get there. Everything in this world such as wealth, knowledge, family, and comfort is there to support this ultimate goal of prosperity in this world and the next, which is achieved through practicing religion. However, people without religion lose sight of this goal and take other means (such as wealth, fame, etc…) as the end.

Activity 1.2b: Review Questions

1. Using a diagram, chart, illustration, sketch, or other creative means, summarize how someone can explain the importance of caring about and investigating religion.

2. Research someone who put forth great effort in their life, but only became recognized for this effort after they passed away.

   Details to include:
   a. Date of Birth and Death.
   b. Place of Birth and Death.
   c. Educational Background/Field of Expertise.
   d. Summary of what they are recognized for.
   e. Why were they not recognized during their life?

3. Look up the following verses of the Qurʾān. Explain which of the potential benefits of religion they relate to and why.

   a. Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verse 110

   b. Sūrah an-Najm (53), Verse 39

   c. Sūrah an-Nūr (24), Verse 55

   d. Sūrah ash-Sharḥ (94), Verse 5

4. What does the story of Dr. Piero Anversa (read the newspaper article below about him) indicate about his purpose behind seeking knowledge?
   https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/29/health/dr-piero-anversa-harvard-retraction.html

The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/29/health/dr-piero-anversa-harvard-retraction.html

He Promised to Restore Damaged Hearts. Harvard Says His Lab Fabricated Research.

By Gina Kolata
Oct. 29, 2018

For Dr. Piero Anversa, the fall from scientific grace has been long, and the landing hard.

Researchers worldwide once hailed his research as revolutionary, promising the seemingly impossible: a way to grow new heart cells to replace those lost in heart attacks and heart failure, leading killers in the United States.

But Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, his former employers, this month accused Dr. Anversa and his laboratory of extensive scientific malpractice. More than 30 research studies produced over more than a decade contain falsified or fabricated data, officials concluded, and should be retracted. Last year the hospital paid a $10 million settlement to the federal government after the Department of Justice alleged that Dr. Anversa and two members of his team were responsible for fraudulently obtaining research funding from the National Institutes of Health.

"The number of papers is extraordinary," said Dr. Jeffrey Flier, until 2016 the dean of Harvard Medical School. "I can't recall another case like this."

Dr. Anversa's story has laid bare some of the hazards of modern medical research: the temptation to embrace a promising new theory, the reluctance to heed contrary evidence and the institutional barriers to promptly stopping malfeasance. Even after three independent researchers were unable to reproduce his findings in 2004, Harvard hired him in 2007 and his lab continued to churn out studies upholding his theory.

"Science at this level is like a battleship, and it's really hard to turn it around," said Dr. Jonathan Moreno, a professor of bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania. "People get emotionally invested, financially invested, professionally invested."

Dr. Anversa, 80, now lives in his son's elegant apartment on the Upper East Side. It has high ceilings, Oriental rugs and a marble fireplace, but little evidence of the life he once led at the forefront of science, save for a framed 2001 front page article in The New York Times about his work.

He is slightly stooped and walks gingerly — hip trouble, he said. The stress has made sleep difficult, but he adheres to a routine: in bed by 9 p.m., up before dawn. He spends most days writing grant proposals that he hopes to submit should he ever land another job.

He insists that he did nothing wrong, that his stunning results are real, and that he was betrayed by a rogue colleague who altered data in paper after paper. On a recent afternoon, he sat on the sofa, pecking on his laptop with two fingers, calling up emails from people who had supported him.

"I am an 80-year-old man who has worked all his life in an attempt to have an impact on heart failure," Dr. Anversa said, his voice rising. "Now I am isolated."

Harvard's investigation of Dr. Anversa's laboratory took five years to complete and ended with the university saying 31 papers it produced should be retracted.
Kayana Szymczak for The New York Times

His is a particularly acrid cautionary tale of scientific hubris.

“It’s kind of been the longest-running version of ‘Mean Girls’,” said Dr. Richard T. Lee, a professor of stem cell and regenerative biology at Harvard. “Except most of the characters were adult men.”

“It was like he grew the heart back”

At a meeting of the American Heart Association in 2000, Dr. Anversa, then a professor at New York Medical College in Valhalla, strode to the podium and delivered a dramatic announcement: In mice, bone marrow contained stem cells that could be used to regenerate heart muscle.

He was suggesting that a basic tenet of cardiology — that the human heart cannot be regenerated — was wrong. If he was correct, he had discovered hope for millions of heart patients.

The presentation was replete with colorful slides of small and underdeveloped cells — new heart muscle cells maturing, he said.

“It was like he grew the heart back,” recalled Dr. Charles Murry, director of the Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine at the University of Washington in Seattle.

The hypothesis, widely held at the time, was that the body had stem cells — immature primitive cells — that in the right environment could turn into any other cells in the body. Put a stem cell into the liver, scientists hoped, and it would turn into a liver cell. Put a stem cell into the heart, Dr. Anversa said, and it really could turn into a heart cell. He and his colleagues published the research in 2001 in Nature.

“Unsurprisingly, companies started popping up and taking bone marrow cells and injecting them into peoples’ hearts,” Dr. Murry said. “The thing goes viral worldwide. It was freaking unbelievable.”

Dr. Anversa’s group later reported something even more astounding. Bone marrow was known to have stem cells that can grow into blood cells. But no one ever thought the heart had stem cells. Yet he reported that it did and that those heart stem cells can be removed, grown in petri dishes, and injected back into the heart to regenerate the muscle after a heart attack.

The virtuoso defense

From the very beginning, there were scientists who doubted Dr. Anversa’s claims. He had not been the first to wonder if stem cells from bone marrow could be transformed into heart cells. Dr. Murry and Loren Field, a professor of medicine at Indiana University School of Medicine, had tried the experiment in the late 1990s. They saw no new heart cells and moved on, never publishing those data.

They sat together in the audience when Dr. Anversa presented his findings in 2000. Dr. Murry turned to Dr. Field and asked, “How the hell did we miss this?” They returned to their labs to redo the experiment. But again, they could not make the process yield new heart cells.

Dr. Anversa with Jan Kajstura, the balding man in the back, Dr. Annarosa Leri, fourth from right, and others at New York Medical College in Valhalla, N.Y., in 2001. Susan B. Markisz

Their paper was published in the journal Nature in 2004, along with another study by Irving Weissman, director of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at Stanford University. He, too, failed to replicate Dr. Anversa's results. That same year, Dr. Bernd Fleischmann, a professor of physiology at the University of Bonn, reported in Nature Medicine that he had been unable to replicate Dr. Anversa's results. The Times covered the questioning of Dr. Anversa's findings in a 2005 article, "Tracking the Uncertain Science of Growing Heart Cells."

Other labs reported seeing a few heart cells generated, but nothing close to what Dr. Anversa reported.

"Those incremental results kept hope alive," Dr. Field said.

At one scientific meeting, Dr. Murry said he questioned Dr. Anversa's findings. On a screen, he put up a slide of heart cells from his lab and, next to it, a slide of heart cells from Dr. Anversa's laboratory. Then he put up a photoshopped image of his lab's cells. They looked just like the image of the cells from Dr. Anversa's lab.

In the question-and-answer period, Dr. Anversa's colleague and collaborator, Dr. Bernardo Nadal-Ginard, took the microphone to offer a withering riposte to Dr. Murry

"I love Plácido Domingo," Dr. Nadal-Ginard recalled saying. "I wish I could sing like Plácido Domingo. I try and try to sing like Plácido Domingo, and I fail."

"You," he told Dr. Murry, "are not Plácido Domingo."

It became known as the virtuoso defense.

Harvard investigates

As Dr. Anversa's fame grew, along with grants, he earned perhaps the greatest of scientific plaudits in 2007: a professorship at Harvard Medical School and a position at its teaching hospital, Brigham and Women's, as director of its Center for Regenerative Medicine.

Officials at the hospital and university declined to discuss his hiring. In a statement, the hospital said: "Breakthrough science can often initially be perceived as controversial. Controversy regarding one's research findings is not enough to rule out an otherwise qualified individual."

In 2012 a new controversy emerged.

A key member of Dr. Anversa's team, Dr. Jan Kajstura, was the first author on a paper in Circulation that seemed to offer final proof that the heart could regenerate. He worked with a scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Bruce Buchholz, who measured carbon isotope levels in 36 hearts from people ranging in age from 2 to 78. Because of nuclear testing done in the 1950s, older people were exposed to more radioactive isotopes than younger people.

If the body cannot produce new heart cells, the amounts of radioactive carbon should have been higher in the heart cells of older people. But in that paper, Dr. Kajstura and his colleagues reported, older hearts did not have more radioactive carbon. Heart cells are constantly being replaced, they concluded.

When Dr. Buchholz read the paper, he was stunned. He had provided data on radioactivity levels to Dr. Kajstura, but the data published in the study had been altered to make the old hearts look the same as the young ones. Dr. Buchholz said in an interview that science depends on trust among collaborators, that he had implicitly trusted Dr. Anversa's group with his data. Now that trust was broken.

"I learned an unpleasant lesson," he said.

He called Dr. Anversa and demanded that the paper be retracted. If data had been changed, Dr. Anversa recalled telling him, it had not been with his knowledge. “I said, ‘Bruce, you are saying Jan is a fraud,’” Dr. Anversa said in an interview.

Dr. Anversa said he confronted Dr. Kajstura, who did the analysis again. Dr. Anversa said he was reassured by the revised work and believed that the findings in the paper were still correct. But the hospital retracted the paper in 2014.

Dr. Kajstura did not respond to repeated messages left for him over the past week at his wife’s office and with his daughter and his daughter-in-law. He did not seem to be home in Rochester, N.Y., last week, and a note was left there requesting an interview.

Even before the paper was officially retracted, Dr. Anversa’s and Dr. Kajstura’s careers began unraveling. On Jan. 10, 2013, investigators at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital raided Dr. Anversa’s laboratory, Dr. Anversa said, seizing computers and scientific notes. He hired a team of lawyers.

“These sudden visits with sequestration of computers and notebooks happened repeatedly over the years, making the working environment impossible,” he wrote in an email.

Dr. Kajstura left the laboratory in 2013, Dr. Anversa said. In a statement, lawyers for Dr. Anversa and his colleague, Dr. Annarosa Leri, blamed Dr. Kajstura for digitally manipulating images published in scientific journals.

“Neither Dr. Anversa nor Dr. Leri ever altered or changed images or data at any time,” the statement said. The researchers “stand by the scientific findings in their papers, including the existence and potential therapeutic benefits of cardiac stem cells.”

A $10 million settlement

Even as Harvard’s investigation continued, many researchers clung to the cardiac stem cell hypothesis.

“This was a perfect storm of ego, wishful thinking and lack of accountability,” said Dr. Jil C. Tardiff, a professor of medicine at the University of Arizona, and a heart-muscle cell researcher.

In 2014, yet another researcher, Jeffery D. Molkentin, a professor at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center Heart Institute, tried to replicate Dr. Anversa’s findings. Dr. Molkentin had spent years finding a way to trace the fate of what Dr. Anversa called cardiac stem cells when they were injected into the heart. Did they become heart cells?

Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Partners Healthcare agreed to pay the federal government $10 million in 2017 to settle allegations that Dr. Anversa and two of his colleagues fraudulently obtained research funding from the National Institutes of Health. Kayana Szymczak for The New York Times

"The answer was no," Dr. Molkentin said in an interview. He published his results in Nature. Two independent labs confirmed them.

In 2015, Dr. Anversa was forced out at Harvard. He moved to research posts in Switzerland and Italy, but was fired from both, he said, as the controversy followed him overseas.

Last year, the Department of Justice announced that Brigham and Women's Hospital and Partners Healthcare, a health care system founded by the Brigham and another Harvard-affiliated hospital, would pay $10 million to settle allegations that Dr. Anversa, Dr. Leri and Dr. Kajstura knew, or should have known, that their work included "improper protocols, invalid and inaccurately characterized cardiac stem cells, reckless or deliberately misleading record-keeping, and discrepancies and/or fabrications of data and images."

Despite the setbacks, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, has been conducting a $7.9 million clinical trial of cardiac stem cells that began in 2015. Denis Buxton, associate director of the division of cardiovascular sciences at the institute, said Dr. Anversa's work was a "catalyst" for the study, although the institute does not believe that heart stem cells can turn into heart muscle. Still, some research indicates that heart stem cells and certain bone marrow cells may help form new blood vessels and heart cells, Dr. Buxton said.

But the institute announced on Monday that it is pausing the trial to review its "scientific foundations."

A final verdict

This month, Dr. Anversa got Harvard's conclusive findings on his life's work. In an Oct. 3 letter that Dr. Anversa provided to The Times, officials at Harvard and its teaching hospital told him that he had "committed research misconduct" in eight papers, some published and others submitted for publication, as well as in a grant application. Although he was the lead author on many of the other papers that Harvard said must be retracted, the university said the evidence did not support his being responsible for the malfeasance in those cases. Harvard did not name the culprit or culprits in its letter to Dr. Anversa.

But the university said 31 scientific papers produced by Dr. Anversa's laboratories, going back to 2001, should be retracted. University and hospital officials notified each journal of their conclusions as well as the Office of Research Integrity at the Department of Health and Human Services, which can recommend that the federal government ban researchers from receiving federal funds. Anyone associated with Harvard or the hospital who gives Dr. Anversa a reference must also describe his misconduct.

Dr. Anversa insists that he is being unfairly punished for what he says were Dr. Kajstura's deceptions. "How could I be so stupid as not to realize that he was cheating?" Dr. Anversa said.

But other scientists say that as the head of the lab and a principal author on many papers, he must accept responsibility for the work even if he did not commit the fraud.

It did not surprise some in academia that the bold promises of the research persisted despite the contested evidence.

"There was an argument in the philosophy of science about whether there is such a thing as a 'crucial experiment,'" said Dr. Moreno, the ethics professor, referring to a study that answers a question once and for all.

"It turns out there isn't. People can see what they want to see."

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1.3 Why People Turn Away from Religion

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- List the five prominent historical reasons for why people have moved away from religion.
- Explain the two basic reasons why people have misconceptions about religion.
- Understand that religious doctrines differ among different religions.
- Identify the particular qualities of some religions that have led people to turn away from them.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What does it mean to be religious? Discuss each of your ideas and come up with one line as a group of what it means to be religious in today's society.

REASONS FOR TURNING AWAY FROM RELIGION

JORDAN: "I'm still having a hard time accepting it even though I see the logic in the need to investigate religion. Why is it that so many people around me have turned away from religion? Often people do not even like to be called 'religious' anymore."

Activity 1.3a: Quick Write

Before reading the rebuttal to this question, consider how you might answer this question if someone were to ask you this right now. What have you noticed around you—whether it be in your friends circle, or even just society in general? Is it their surroundings? What or who are their major influencers?

ME: "Let us look at some of the historical reasons why people have had issues with religion. In each of these cases, we will see that the cause for why people have a problem with religion is either because of:

a) Generalizing and assuming that all religions are the same.

b) Not thinking deeply enough and understanding why a religion is the way it is.

c) Interpreting religion according to one's own understanding, or in accordance with a person's benefits and desires."

REASON 1:

Throughout history, religions have contained illogical teachings. Human beings are intuitive creatures, and naturally when presented with arguments that do not make sense, they turn away from them. Therefore, they turn away from religion.

Some examples of illogical religious teachings include:

- The Church insisted that the planets and the sun revolve around the earth.
- Religions that believe in the concept of The Trinity where they say that God is one but God is also three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Claiming that God has a son or a daughter.
- Saying that God is All-Powerful, yet believing in multiple other gods.
- Attributing a body to God.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think some of the above statements could cause a person enough confusion to turn away from religion?

Just because some claimed religious teachings are illogical teachings that does not mean that all religions are illogical. All of the Divine religions—in their **original form**—contained true and logical teachings which explained the reality of the world in which we live. However, unfortunately, over time, false beliefs became woven into religion. For example, the Church's belief in The Trinity which makes the claim that "three is one and one is three" and that God has a son are illogical and have gotten many people to doubt Christianity due to these teachings. Examples from other religions include the belief that God has a body, or manifests Himself in human form.

When it comes to Islam, there are some illogical beliefs that are claimed by some groups to be part of Islam. These beliefs are either due to cultural influences or to reaching a false answer to a theological dilemma. An example is the belief that Allah ﷻ has human-like features which will be seen in the Hereafter.

However, there are three unique factors about Islam—especially Shīʿah Islam—that protect it from illogical teachings:

1. The presence of the Noble Qurʾān in its true and original form.
2. The teachings of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, which guide people to the correct answers when it comes to theological dilemmas.
3. The fact that Islam (especially the Qurʾān) promotes logical reasoning and emphasizes it very much; and encourages people to ask questions. This is in contrast to other religions which emphasize blind faith or set illogical criteria for salvation and success.

Therefore, when we examine the teachings of any religion, we should look for a religion that promotes the use of logic; and which has a mechanism for protecting its teachings from false and irrational beliefs.

The other important point here is that there are times when Islamic teachings may at first seem illogical. However, the reason a Muslim submits to such teachings is due to logical reasons. They have proven the existence of One God who is the Creator and Nourisher, the deputation of Prophets ﷺ and their message, and that these teachings—even though at first they may not seem to make sense—are part of this message. Shīʿah Islam is very unique in that everything about this faith is built on logic. Everything makes sense at the fundamental level.

REASON 2:

Unfortunately, religious people often resort to violence. Human beings, when presented with violence that is unjustified, find such violence abhorrent.

There are numerous examples, both historical and current, of religious people who have resorted to violence:

- The Daesh (ISIS) commit acts of terrorism in the name of Islam.
- Christian cults have committed mass suicide.
- The Spanish Inquisition killed many Muslims, Jews, and Protestants in Spain from the late 1400's to the early 1800's.
- Hindu extremists have killed many Muslims in India.
- Extreme Jewish Zionist settlers terrorize Palestinians in the name of religion.
- Rakhine Buddhists have committed ethnic cleansing by killing Rohingya Muslims, and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to leave Myanmar.

Such violence is wrong and was one of the reasons why the angels questioned Allah ﷻ as to why He created human beings. In the Qur'ān, they are quoted as asking: *"Will you place on the earth one who corrupts and spills blood?"*[1] Groups like Daesh are making use of the name of Islam to accomplish their non-Islamic objectives. However, just because some people use religion in a violent way to accomplish their selfish objectives, it does not make religion inherently bad. In fact, a truly religious society that is governed by people who are God-conscious will be very peaceful and just.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 30.

REASON 3:

Religion limits and provides specific guidelines for one's desires, but human beings desire to be free and enjoy life without any restrictions.

Those people who want to be free to pursue their lusts and passions are not truly free—they are actually enslaved to themselves. They take orders from their lower selves. However, is it not then better to be a slave of Allah ﷻ—the One who created us and knows what is best for us, the One who can give us from His unlimited treasures, and who wants to help us to be successful? Or is it better to be a slave to ourselves with all of our ignorances, shortcomings, and weaknesses?

Leaving our lusts and desires unchecked will lead to terrible consequences for us as individuals, as well as for our societies. This is why even secular countries have laws that restrict or limit certain actions. Look at something as simple as driving rules that are put in place to ensure some form of safety on the roads. Religion does not 'suppress' desires, rather it 'directs' them in such a way that people can enjoy their lives in a healthy and balanced manner, and the rights of others are not infringed upon.

REASON 4:

Religion makes it hard to live comfortably in this world. Human beings have basic needs of food, shelter, care, and comfort that need to be met, but religion says that if you want to be religious, then you have to shun these needs and live a sheltered life.

There might be religions that encourage their followers to run away from this world and deny themselves their basic needs. A practical religion provides its followers with a pragmatic strategy to live comfortably in this temporary world, and also prepare in the best way for the afterlife which is eternal. Islam, for example, teaches us to use this world to prepare for and build our life in the Hereafter. The idea is not to run away from this world and the things in it, but one must not be attached to them. For example, Prophet Sulaymān ﷺ had a vast kingdom that extended even to the animal world and the *Jinn*. However, he was not attached to them, nor did he let these things take him away from Allah ﷻ or his purpose in life.

The idea is not to run away from this world and the things in it, but one must not be attached to them

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some specific ways you can think of that Islam explains to us how to survive in this world and also prepare for the Hereafter?

REASON 5:

Religion is a bunch of rules and regulations without much benefit.

Response: Firstly, rules and regulations are an important part of life. All institutions and systems in our world have rules. The more important an organization is, the stricter their rules will be. For example, airports and airplanes have very strict rules at all stages for anyone who wants to take a flight. Universities and colleges would not function if there were not strict sets of rules and regulations in place that everyone has to follow. Similarly, for religion to give benefit to our lives, it must contain a set of rules and guidelines.

Having said that, teachers of religion should educate their students about more than just the rules and regulations of religion. They should teach them about the beliefs, ethics, and incredible benefits of religion (that were covered in Lesson 1.2). Followers of religion should show others—especially through their attitude and behavior—that religion is the best gift that they have ever been given. When a person looks at someone who is a follower of religion, they should see that they are happy to have access to instructions and guidelines (like praying, fasting, how to deal with others, etc.) that will guarantee their success in this world and the next.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some ways in which you might be able to show the benefits and beauty of having a religion to follow in your life? Explain.

Activity 1.3b: Review

1. Research one of the examples provided about how religion is sometimes used to justify violence (or choose a current example of your own). Summarize your findings in a paragraph written in your own words.

   Chosen Example: _____

2. Can people who think they are free actually be slaves to someone or something? Explain.

3. Consider the opposite of the above question: Can people who feel enslaved to something or someone actually be free? Explain.

4. Give an example of a belief in Shīʿah Islam that is logical. How and why is it logical?

5. What are some unique aspects of the religion of Islam?

1.4 Religion is Not a Tool

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Respond to the claim that religion was fabricated as a means of pacifying fear of the unknown, or as a tool of oppression.

Activity 1.4a: Anticipation Guide

Read the statements below, and then fill in the column on the right on whether you agree with the statement or disagree with it and explain briefly why.

Statements	Yes, I agree	No, I disagree
Religion is a good tool to justify treating people, or certain groups of people, unfairly.		
Religious teachings and scientific teachings are usually worlds apart.		
Religions that are used to oppress other people have been altered to be this way.		

JORDAN: "Thank you for offering logical explanations to my queries. Your reasons have helped clear the doubts and confusion in my mind that were not allowing me to see religion for what it is.

There is still something that is troubling me though. Throughout history, religions were made up as a way of allowing people to feel like they have answers to things that:

- Are otherwise unknown, like what happens after death.
- Cause fear, like storms, droughts, tsunamis, earthquakes, and other terrifying natural phenomena (a concept that is sometimes referred to as "god of the gaps").

In some instances, religion has been used as a tool that allows a group of people to treat another group unfairly. For example, certain religions promote a type of caste system, which could be used as a way of blaming the people who are oppressed for their own oppression: "It is your own fault that you were born into a lower caste due to what you did in your previous life!" Religion becomes a "pacifier" for these people to keep them quiet, just as parents who want to keep a baby from crying may offer the baby a pacifier to soothe them."

Activity 1.4b: Current Events

Can you think of any present-day oppressions that may be occuring due to the altering of a religion? Choose two such examples to learn more about, and complete the following venn diagram, paying close attention to their similarities and differences.

This activity can be done in pairs/ groups or individually. Students can also refer to the previous lesson for examples to potentially research.

ME: "Here are some possible answers to your questions:

1. There may have been some religions in the past that were concocted as a means of making people feel good and safe at times of difficulty. This however, does not mean that all religions were made up for that purpose.
2. There might have been some people who turned to religion as an answer for the unknown or as a source of deep comfort when feeling fear, but that does not mean that all religions are fake. If something does serve a purpose (for example, religion providing comfort) that does not mean this comfort is fake. It also does not mean that this is the ultimate purpose of religion. So logically, one must still investigate whether the religious teachings that are offered are actually providing comfort based on truth or falsehood.
3. There might have been some religions in the past that were created as a way of dealing with people's fears or treating individuals unfairly, but that does not necessarily apply to all religions. In fact, most of the time a true religion was corrupted and altered in order for it to be used as a tool for oppression. However, this does not mean that the religion in its true form was created to oppress anyone though.
4. Just because religion gives you an answer to certain things that would otherwise have been unknown, it does not mean that it is fake. In fact, religion should be appreciated and admired for it being able to give answers to these questions, and for it to be a source of comfort in times of difficulties."

When examining a religion in relation to the above factors, we need to consider the following points:

- **Do the teachings of the religion contradict proven scientific knowledge (not just theories or hypotheses) and the obvious reality of the world around us?**
  If this is proven, then of course this religion cannot be true. If however, a religion encourages us to examine the world around us and reveals the reality of this world to us, then this is an indication that it is a true religion (i.e., a true description of the reality of this world).

- **Do the teachings of the religion take away people's influence or agency?**
  For example, many oppressive rulers in the past and even present, claim that it is God's Will that they are in power. They make a false argument that if God did not want them in power, then He would not have allowed them to take this position. This is a false argument that removes responsibility from such rulers for their evil actions, and removes agency and free will from the people to oppose them. A religion that removes this kind of ability from human actions cannot be a true religion. If however, a religion gives the means and responsibility to people, and emphasizes their free will, then this is an indication that this is a true religion.

- **Does the religion in question teach racism and discrimination?**
  For example, some religions teach that only the followers of that religion (even if only by name) will achieve salvation. Others teach that only people of a certain ethnic background are the "chosen people." A religion that teaches discrimination is plainly false, as all human beings have been created as equal creatures by God Almighty, regardless of gender, color, race, or ethnicity. If however, a religion teaches equality among human beings, and gives them honor only based on their good choices in life, then this is an indication that this is a true religion.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why does a lack of connection with the world around us and discrimination have no place in a true religion?

It is true that there have been false and concocted religions, and also religious teachings that have been corrupted or altered to serve certain purposes. However, we still have the mechanism of our intellect in examining whether religious teachings are true or not. Just because some religions were concocted or corrupted, it does not mean that all religions are like this. We should use our intellect and innate knowledge to find that religion which meets the above criteria in explaining the reality of the world around us in the truest way possible.

Activity 1.4c: Review Questions

1. Now that you have read the full lesson, go back to the Anticipation Guide and read through the statements again. Have your answers changed any? If so, then how?

2. Based on Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 4, and Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt (79), Verse 24, explain how the Pharaoh (Firawn) used religion as a tool.

3. Give an example of how religion can provide an answer to something that is unknown, other than the examples mentioned in this lesson.

4. Give an example of how religion can provide comfort in times of fear, other than the examples mentioned in this lesson.

1.5 Origins of Religion

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain the Islamic theory about the history of religions.
- Identify the two main ways in which the enemies of the Prophets ﷺ corrupted the teachings of the Prophets ﷺ.
- When presented with information about modern day sects and splinter groups within Islam, apply what was learned in this lesson to recognize the nature of the deviation from the original message of the Prophet ﷺ.

JORDAN: "When did religions begin?"

ME: "There are different theories that people who study religion from a historical perspective have given as an answer to this question. However, Muslims believe that religion—and the worldview that comes with it—began with the very first human being on this Earth, who was the Prophet Ādam ﷺ. Throughout history, every Messenger explained religion, and the worldview that human beings should have. It has been the same core messages from the very beginning which are:

1. Belief in the One and Only God who created us and sustains us.
2. Belief in the Prophets ﷺ and the messages that they brought to us as a way of life.
3. Belief in the Hereafter as our ultimate destination."

Due to specific circumstances of particular times and places, sometimes the laws and ritual differed, but the core messages were always the same.

Unfortunately, throughout history, there were always people who opposed the message of the Prophets ﷺ and tried to corrupt their teachings in different ways due to their selfish interests. For example, there were Rabbis who misrepresented what the Torah (Tawrah) said, and explained laws incorrectly in order to gain profit from the people. The Qur'ān mentions this as follows:

"So woe to those who write the 'scripture' with their own hands, then say: 'This is from Allah,' in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn." [1]

There were two major ways in which the enemies of Allah ﷻ and the enemies of the Prophets ﷺ changed the religion that was taught by the Messengers ﷺ.

First, they tried to make religion into something that focused exclusively on the relationship of people to God. They took out that portion of religion which focuses on the relationship of people to people, and that explains how we are supposed to live as communities and societies in a way that would allow us to reach true success.

STOP AND REFLECT: Without religion to guide our interactions with others, what types of issues might we face within our communities? Think of a current issue that could have benefited from more religious guidance to determine community interactions.

The messages taught by the Prophets ﷺ were comprehensive and a complete system of guidance on how we can live in the most successful way. Naturally, this included guidance on how to raise families, how to educate, how to balance gender roles, how to be organized in communities and societies, how to defend oneself against enemies, how to run an economy and avoid interest, etc. The mixing of a secular worldview into religion has caused many to steer away from the true messages of the Prophets ﷺ.

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 79.

Activity 1.5a: Group Discussion

1. Take the next 5 minutes to think about why the enemies of the Prophets ﷺ would want to mix secular worldview into religion. How would they benefit from this? Is there a specific example in history you can think of?

2. Discuss your thoughts with your partner or group. How were your examples similar and different from theirs? Take notes below. Come up with one example that you both agree on to share with the class.

3. **SHARE:** In the next 10-15 minutes, each pair will share their examples and reasonings with the rest of the class. Each pair's historical example will be written where everyone can see.

4. **REFLECTION:** After the class discussion, take a close look at the list of examples the different groups thought of. What do they all have in common? If these people had not mixed the secular worldview into religion, how would the outcome have been different?

The second way in which religion was altered from its true teaching is that it was turned into a set of rites and rituals without having real significance. An example of this can be found in Wahhabism.

Wahhabism is named after its founder, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb, who was born in the 18th Century in what is now Saudi Arabia. From 1744, Wahhabism was supported by the Saudi family. Even though Wahhāb's extreme teachings were rejected and opposed by many of the most notable Sunnī Muslim scholars of his time, through the alliance with the Saudi family, the Wahhābi creed spread in Saudi Arabia and beyond. The Saudis began spending heavily on various masājid and different propaganda in order to spread the teachings of this creed.

Wahhāb created an incorrect interpretation of Islam. He said that talking to the Prophet ﷺ after his death, visiting the graves of the righteous who have left this world, and doing *tawassul* (seeking a means to Allah ﷻ by way of virtuous people) were all examples of polytheism and innovations. He, along with the Saudi family, also tried to convince others that whoever does not believe in what Wahhāb said was an unbeliever, guilty of polytheism, whose blood may be shed, and whose property plundered. Wahhabism made its followers obsessed about condemning people who they thought did polytheism, and accusing them of being disbelievers. This type of obsession with other people's practices has led the Wahhābis to commit many crimes in the name of their narrow and incorrect version of Islam. For example, they were responsible for the destruction of the Shrine of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ in 1802, the destruction of Jannatul Baqīʿ twice (once in 1806, and again in 1925), for massacring thousands of people, and for inspiring many acts of terrorism in recent history.

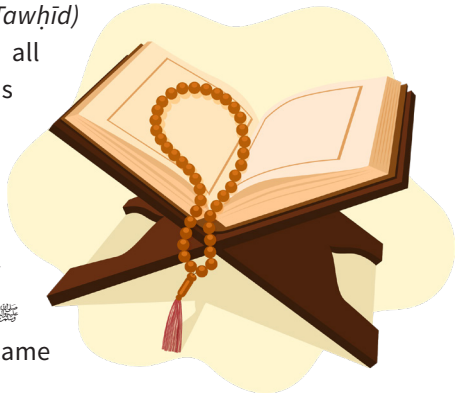
Wahhabism is a perfect example of emptying religion of its true essence, and changing religion to suit one's own desires and needs. While the family of Saud needed the religious aspect for their political power, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb needed a political position to spread his rejected and convoluted ideas of Islam.

We need to be very cautious and not follow those ideologies that have been manipulated in order to benefit a person or a group of people. When a religion's focus is outward worship–without reflection, thinking, and learning—it has lost its true nature which is to show people how to serve and become nearer to Allah ﷻ.

Throughout history, Allah ﷻ sent Messengers after Messengers to provide correct teachings, and advance the system of guidance.

This was until the advent of Islam—which Allah ﷻ sent as the final, complete, and perfect religion—and protected it by means of the Qurʾān and the Ahlul Bayt ؑ.

The message of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Noble Qurʾān is not a new message; rather, it is the completion of all the previous messages sent through other Prophets ؑ. It also brings people back to the pure beliefs of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)* that were taught by all the Prophets ؑ. This is why the Noble Qurʾān, especially in Sūrah al-Baqarah, repeatedly refers to the Qurʾān and the message of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ as "confirming what came before it."[2]



In addition to this, because of the respect that many faiths have for Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ and because he was such a great proponent of Monotheism, Muslims were instructed to declare that they were following the pure *(ḥanīf)* faith that Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ taught, free from any polytheism.

Therefore, the message of Islam can be seen as a natural conclusion, and the peak of the guidance that Allah ﷻ was providing to human beings.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 97.

Activity 1.5b: Review Questions

1. Has there or could there ever have been a time without religion? Why or why not?

2. How did the enemies of the Prophets ﷺ corrupt their teachings?

Activity 1.5b: Review Questions (Continued)

3. This lesson mentions the three core aspects of religion from the beginning of time as being:
   - **a.** Belief in the One and Only God who created us and sustains us.
   - **b.** Belief in the Prophets ﷺ and the message that they brought to us as a way of life.
   - **c.** Belief in the Hereafter as our ultimate destination.

   Choose two of the five Ulul ʿAzm Prophets, and complete the chart below with evidence of these aspects being the core of their teachings.

Prophet Chosen	Evidence of their belief in One God	Evidence of their belief in the other Prophets ﷺ and their messages	Evidence of their belief in the Hereafter

4. **SPIRITUAL CONNECTION:** What are some things that you do in your daily life which keep the three core concepts at the center of your day?

1.6 Worldviews

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Become familiar with the different ways of seeking knowledge.
- Understand what a Worldview is, and how Worldviews are related to the acceptance or denial of the way of seeking knowledge.
- Compare and contrast different Worldviews, with a special emphasis on the secular vs. rational Worldview.
- Apply these Worldviews to trends seen among Muslims today.

JORDAN: "I'll be honest with you—I am a hands-on type of person. All I know about is what I can see, feel, hear, touch…basically anything that I can sense. Other than that, I cannot be too sure about much else. Talk about God and religion has to do with things that I cannot see, feel, and so on, therefore I do not know God or religion, so what is the point of discussing this any further?"

ME: "Well let's first take a step back and ponder upon the question: 'How do we know what we know?' You mentioned that you are a person who relies on your senses. Is that the only way of knowing and finding the truth?"

STOP AND REFLECT: What are ways of knowing and finding the truth? Can you think of a specific example that applies to your life?

There are three ways that human beings can understand the world around them:

1.	**Our five senses**	The senses of hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste are the most immediate ways of interacting with the world around us. These are also the first things to be developed for a child. A baby will see their mother and father, smell different scents, hear the noises around them, and feel and taste what is given to them. As their senses develop, and as they grow up, they will come to know more and more about the world around them.
2.	**Intellect**	Human beings are more than just their senses. They have been created with a powerful ability to reason with their intellect (known as the *ʿaql*) independently of the senses. This is part of the *fiṭrah*, meaning the innate nature. By reasoning about those things that a person knows, one can come to understand those things that one does not know. For example, everyone knows that a particular thing that came to be must have a cause, or something that made it come to be. So for example, when astronomers observed a group of rock formations in the solar system moving in a certain pattern, they realized there must be a cause for that special movement, such as the presence of a ninth planet.
3.	**Inspiration and Revelation**	There are certain individuals who gain an understanding of the world around them due to their inner purity *(taqwā)*. These individuals were either Prophets ﷺ, or others who were not Prophets—like the 12 Imāms ﷺ—but who were chosen by Allah ﷻ to be His representatives after the last Prophet ﷺ, or their true followers. The inspiration given to Prophets ﷺ is called *'waḥī.'* The inspiration given to non-Prophets is called *'ilhām.'* The Qurʾān gives us examples of both Prophets ﷺ who received *waḥī,* and non-Prophets who received *ilhām*. For example, both Lady Maryam, the mother of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ, and the mother of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ received *ilhām* at key moments in their lives due to their inner purity.

In recent times, Karbalāʾī Kāẓim (d. 1921) was an uneducated, but outstandingly pious and honest farmer. Due to his diligence in paying *zakāh,* and being very careful about not mixing *ḥarām* (forbidden things) and *ḥalāl* (permissible things), he was gifted with a miraculous ability of being able to read and understand the Qurʾān without ever having been taught the Qurʾān. He could see the verses of the Qurʾān as light, and he would be able to distinguish between verses of the Qurʾān and other words on a page that were not Qurʾān because of the light that emanated from the verses of the Qurʾan.

Short film about Karbalāī Kāẓim
https://youtu.be/vyQz5-oMqvk

Speech by Āyatullāh Nāsir Makarim Shīrāzī about Karbalāī Kāẓim
https://youtu.be/amMXsUi6Ea0

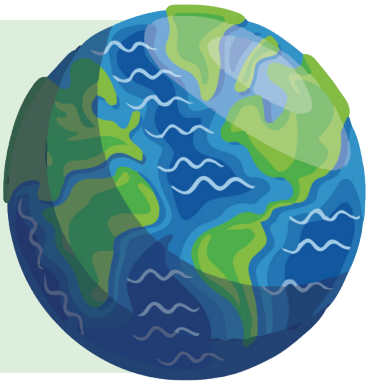
JORDAN: "I understand now that there is a way of knowing things through our intellect in a way that spans beyond our senses. But as for inspiration and revelation, I cannot understand what you are talking about because I have never experienced such things. Therefore, I am tempted to reject what you say!"

ME: "A lack of personal experience about something does not mean that it is wrong, or that it should be rejected. Furthermore, to deny something just because you have not experienced it yourself would be short-sighted. Not understanding something is different from it being illogical. If what I am saying is illogical, then please point out the flaw in my logic. Otherwise, I think you will agree that there is a difference between something that is illogical where you can point out logical fallacies, and something being outside of the scope of one's personal experience where one does not have the right to pass a judgment."

In order to complete this discussion, we would like to present the concept of Worldviews.

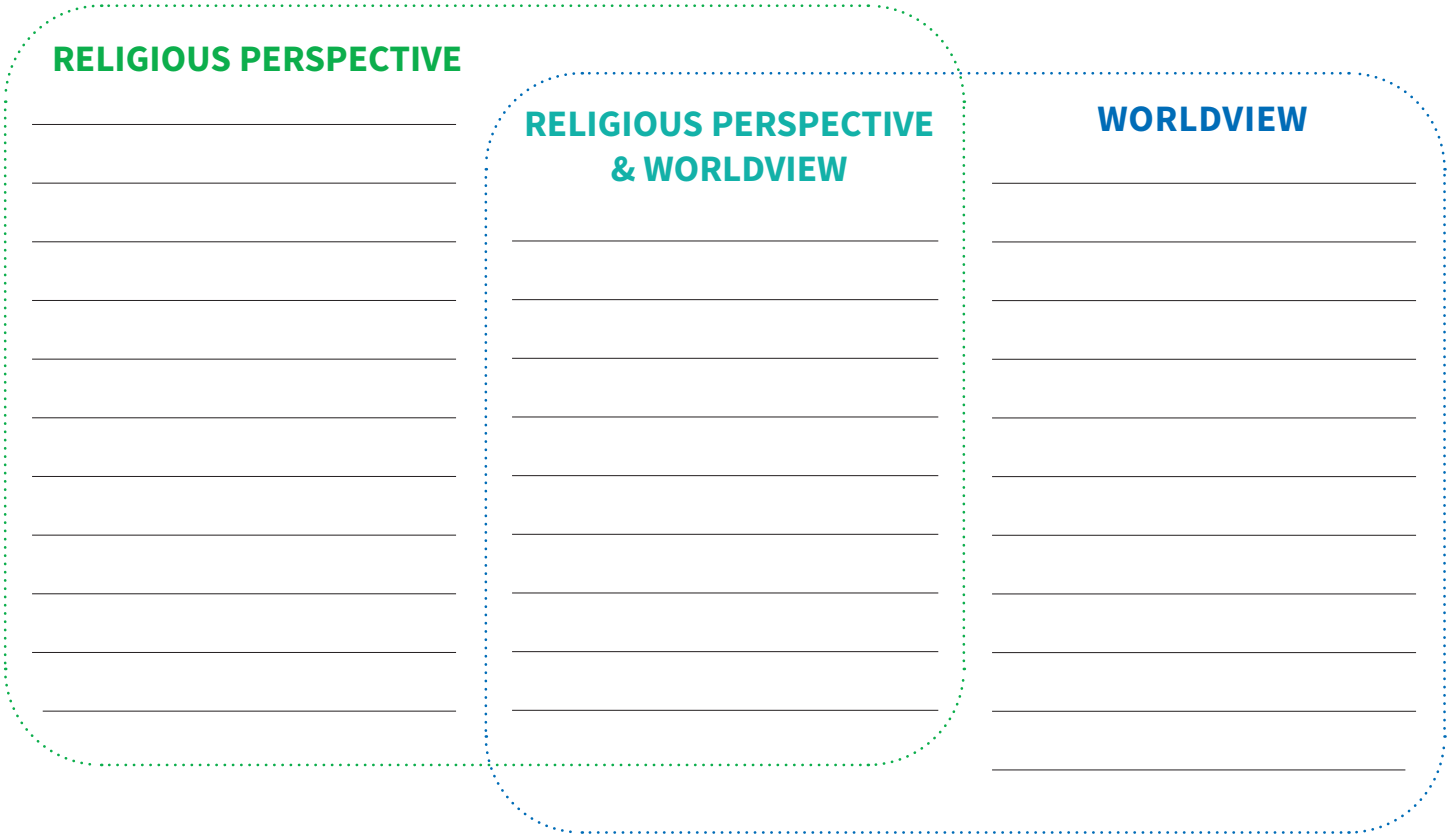
DIFFERENT 'WORLDVIEWS'

A 'Worldview' is a view of the world that is formed on the basis of how we come to understand the world around us. This term is wider in scope than 'religion' because there can be people who have no religion but still have a worldview (like atheists who have a Secular Worldview), and there can be people who have a religion (like Islam or Christianity) but have a Secular Worldview (like a Secular Muslim).



Activity 1.6a: Venn Diagram

Complete the venn diagram below, comparing and contrasting the terms religious perspective and worldview based on your current knowledge.



1. What is the biggest difference you noted between these two terms?

2. Could they be used interchangeably if our religious perspective impacts our worldview? Why or why not?

PEOPLE GENERALLY FORM ONE OF THREE TYPES OF WORLDVIEWS:

1. Secular/Materialistic Worldview	A Worldview that depends on knowing the world purely on the basis of one's senses.
2. Blind Religious Worldview	A Worldview that depends on believing what someone (like a Prophet or an inspired figure) says just because the person (or their book) says it.
3. Rational Worldview	A Worldview that depends on knowing the world based on one's senses and the intellect.

Let us now explore each of these worldviews by explaining their fundamental teachings, and then critically analyzing them.

1. ACCORDING TO A SECULAR/MATERIALISTIC WORLDVIEW:

a) This world does not have an origin or an end beyond the material world ("material" literally means things that are physical and made up of matter). Whatever there is and will be, is contained only in this physical world itself. It is like a page or pages ripped out of a book without an introduction or conclusion.

b) We human beings, and other beings which exist, were created by something or some process that has neither intellect, nor awareness, nor feelings. Some say that we were created by 'Mother Nature' which in reality is not at all like a mother!

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is Mother Nature, according to a secular worldview, not like a true mother?

c) There is no ultimate purpose behind why we are here. This means that whatever purpose or goal we create for ourselves is limited to this world only. Therefore, the sole purposes we have are to:

- Enjoy the world around us as much as possible.
- Profit from this world as much as we can.

d) Success and failure depend on how much you enjoy the material world, and how much you have of it.

e) The standard for what is right and wrong is self-centered; one can easily justify harming others or even killing them if one's own ability to enjoy the world and to acquire the world depends on doing so.

f) There is nothing beyond this world.

g) Religion and the people who brought it are the causes of regression. People who follow religion are considered to be backward.

h) Rather than having several principles of faith, the only principle of faith is 'life of this world.'

ANALYSIS:

If what we know is only limited to what we can sense, then our knowledge will be very limited because:

a) Sometimes, we may lack a particular sense. For example, there are people who do not have the ability to see, hear, etc.

b) What we can sense is very limited. For example, up until now, no one has directly experienced the theorized Planet Nine. Every moment that passes, there are many sound waves we cannot hear, colors we cannot see, and areas of outer space we are clueless about, but we know that those exist despite our lack of sensation.

c) Many times, our senses can make a mistake. Scientists have identified at least 800 examples where our senses trick us into believing something which is false. Examples include mirages, the full moon appearing larger when on the horizon rather than when it is in the sky, the colors of the 2015 dress phenomenon[1] on social media, the famous optical illusion of the old woman vs. young woman picture,[2] and so much more.

Basing our worldview only on what we can experience with our senses is building on shaky, unstable foundations.

d) There are certain fundamental questions we would like to answer that we cannot answer correctly or fully by just relying on our senses, for example:

1. Where did we come from?
2. For what purpose are we here, and how do we accomplish that purpose?
3. What happens to us after we die?

We can guess the answers to these fundamental questions, but we will never know for sure on the basis of this guesswork.

e) The pleasure-seeking perspective on the goal of life has serious consequences. For example, if someone is not able to enjoy the world that much, or they are not profiting from this world, then there is no point to living anymore. This can lead to suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety, or dangerous addictions to drugs, alcohol, music, or gaming. Someone who is elderly or sick may even be encouraged to end their life as soon as possible because there is no point to live anymore when one is suffering.

1 Wikimedia Foundation. (December 11, 2022). *The dress*. Wikipedia. Retrieved January 10, 2023, from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_dress

2 Saplakoglu, Y. (September 21, 2018). *What you see in this famous optical illusion could reveal how old you are*. LiveScience. Retrieved January 10, 2023, from: https://www.livescience.com/63645-optical-illusion-young-old-woman.html

2. BLIND RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW

This is the type of worldview that is sometimes adopted by people who claim they are religious. In reality, they have discarded their intellects and have adopted incorrect, or sometimes even violent positions because of blindly following others. For example, Zionist Jews sometimes justify illegal occupation, bulldozing of homes, and indiscriminate killing of Palestinians based on religious grounds. There are some Muslims, such as those who follow the ISIS mentality, who adopt very literal and twisted interpretations of the Qurʾān and *Ḥadīth* Texts, and disregard what the intellect or true scholars say regarding the truth.

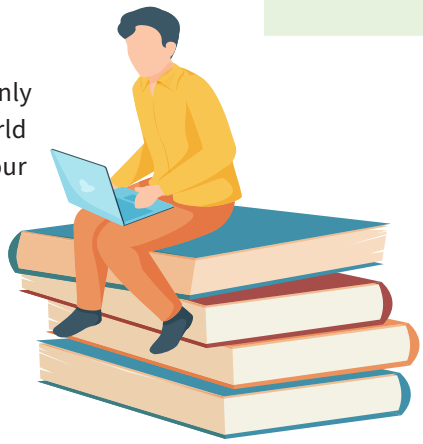
The problem with this worldview is not that the individuals are inspired by religion, but rather how they came to that particular understanding of religion. This differs from when someone reaches the conclusion that they need to follow whatever a Prophet ﷺ says based on logical grounds. So for example, for Muslims to say: "We submit to whatever Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ commands" is perfectly okay, as long as they understand at a logical level why he needs to be obeyed, and they are learning about his teachings from legitimate sources of knowledge (like pious, learned, and trustable scholars). Without that logical understanding, their worldview will be shaky, and they can then easily be exploited by charismatic leaders. At the slightest opportunity or challenge, they can disregard their worldview and adopt a different worldview.

3. RATIONAL WORLDVIEW

This worldview is the correct worldview to adopt. Under this worldview, the fundamental basis of how we understand this world is the intellect. We have to know 'why' we believe what we believe. However, there is only so much we can understand on our own. Once we accept something logically, then our logic will tell us to submit and believe what lies beyond. For example, we can logically establish the existence of God, the need for Divine guides such as Prophets ﷺ and their successors, the Prophethood of the final Messenger ﷺ, and the miracle of the Qurʾān. Then, when the Qurʾān commands us to fast for one month out of the year, or pray on a daily basis, or give in charity, etc., we do not need a logical proof for why we should do so—we will just submit.

We have to know 'why' we believe what we believe

Once we realize that Islam is the perfect belief system and the only true worldview based on intellect, then we need to look at this world and interact with it through the lens of this worldview. Then all of our decisions and actions will be made through this perspective.



Activity 1.6b: Chart it out

Using the information above on the three types of worldviews, complete the table below highlighting the main aspects of each worldview. Then consider what one's actions might look like when acting on this worldview.

WORLDVIEW	PURPOSE BEHIND IT	EXAMPLE OF THIS IN ACTION
Secular Worldview		
Blind Religious Worldview		
Rational Worldview		

In your own words, why is the Rational Worldview the correct perspective to adopt?

SPIRITUAL CONNECTION: What are some things you can do in your daily life to ensure that you consistently maintain a Rational Worldview?

CONCLUSION

"So, to sum up, Jordan, the issue with your approach is that you have limited your Worldview. Are you open to widening your perspective? If yes, then God and religion will take on meaning for you."

Activity 1.6c: Review Questions

1. Explain how someone can be practicing a religion, but still have a "Blind Religious Worldview."

2. Give an example of a religious ritual that a person who has a Secular Worldview would find meaningless. Then give an example of a ritual that a person who has a Secular Worldview would find meaningful.

3. Does someone who holds a Rational Worldview have to understand the reason behind everything they believe in?

CHAPTER 2

Knowing Allah ﷻ

2.1 The Inner Way of Knowing God

2.2 Causes of Alienation from the Fiṭrah

2.3 The Outer Way of Knowing God

2.4 Objections to Argument from Design

2.1 The Inner Way of Knowing God

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain three different ways of establishing the existence of God.
- Understand the four reasons for the existence of a God-knowing and God-seeking innate nature *(fiṭrah)*.
- Define *fiṭrah* and explain its role in establishing the existence of God.
- Distinguish between the *fiṭrah* of a human being and other creatures, and the difference between instincts and *fiṭrah*.

JORDAN: "I am now convinced that I have to investigate religion. I know that not doing so could lead to great potential harm, and that doing so could lead to great potential benefit. I understand that whatever negativity I might have about religion is because of either generalizing what some religions say about all religions, or because of not learning deeply about what a religion actually teaches. Now that I have understood all this, I must investigate religion to see whether religion actually is true. How do I start my investigation?"

ME: "God. By definition, religion is the belief in and worship of God."

JORDAN: "Great! Then prove God's existence to me."

ME: "There are three ways of knowing God. Proving His existence (through logic) is just one of the three ways, and it is called the outer way. But there are two other ways: the inner way, and a third way where God shows Himself to you. Before discussing the other ways, I will first talk about the inner way."

Activity 2.1a: Brainstorming

Students will consider what each of these ways of knowing God means. Write each of the three ways on a separate sheet of chart paper and place them around the room. Breaking up the students into small groups, assign one chart paper to each group with an assigned color marker. Groups must come up with one sentence of what that way of knowing God means. After a short period of time (can be decided by the teacher) each group will move to the next 'station' or chart paper. Each group must complete this for all three 'stations.'

Discuss answers prior to beginning this lesson on each particular way of knowing God.

ME: "According to the inner way, God does not have to be 'proven.' We actually already know about God and want to worship Him. You are asking me to prove something that is already known to you."

JORDAN: "How can you say that I already know God? I know about me, you, my parents, my friends, and visible things around me, but I do not know God! That is why I am having this discussion with you!"

QUICK PARTNER TALK: Each partner has two minutes to share with the other how they think they know God.

ME: "That is okay; there are some things that we actually do know about Him, but we are not paying attention to them, or we have forgotten about. I can show you though, that all human beings are born with a natural understanding of God and a desire to worship Him.

This is similar to physical features, such as a heart, two legs, hair, a face, two eyes, and a nose—all human beings have these (with rare exceptions).

It is also similar to human instincts, like the natural love that human beings have for themselves, the desire for food, the need to protect themselves against any harm, and the want to be with others (in a family, community, and/or society).

Whenever there is a characteristic that:

a) all human beings have,

b) all human beings have had and will continue to have at all times,

c) is not taught to them, and

d) never disappears completely,

then it is considered to be an 'innate' characteristic, meaning one of the ways that human beings are."

STOP AND REFLECT: What is one example of an innate human characteristic, and one that is an acquired (learned) human characteristic?

One of the innate characteristics of human beings is that they know God and desire to worship Him. We know this because of the following reasons:

1. STUDY OF HISTORY

Sociologists (experts who study human societies) have concluded that every society has some sort of religious belief, which means that they know about God and worship Him.[1] As this is something that spans across all people and times, we can say that it is an innate characteristic, meaning that human beings know and worship God.

JORDAN: "True, every society has some sort of religion, but I am sure that every society also has someone or some people who deny the existence of God."

ME: "There might be some exceptions, but the general rule across thousands of years and thousands of societies is that people know and worship God in some form or another. This is too widespread to not be part of human nature."

JORDAN: "But we see especially today that many people are atheists, and perhaps the number of atheists is growing. If it is innate human nature to believe in God, then why is atheism becoming more prevalent? Perhaps people of the past were ignorant and needed a belief system to explain the world to them. However, now advances in science and technology mean that this need is no longer there, so people are turning away from religion."

ME: "There are a number of reasons why atheism is becoming more prevalent. We will discuss this when we come to the discussion on the *fiṭrah* (the innate human instinct of knowing God). However, we also see that many people in today's world do believe in God and religion, and many are turning to God for different reasons. This is despite the advances in science and technology, as well as all the material comforts available to them. People who live in affluent societies do not have some of the traditional motivations for turning to God, such as a Being to ask for their material needs, or explaining what happens in nature. However, the presence of religious people in societies like these, is in fact an even stronger argument that there is an innate human nature that is aware of God. Even when we have no material needs, we turn to God for other needs that we know only He can fulfill for us."

INNATE DESIRE IN CHILDREN VIDEO

https://youtu.be/Tz9CtQMTE_s

2. PSYCHOLOGY

Psychologists study human nature and human behavior. They have concluded that the same way human beings are born with a natural love for beauty, and a natural desire to know things they are ignorant about (curiosity and inquisitive nature), they also have a desire to know and worship God.

1 See for example https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter-15-religion/

3. STATEMENTS IN THE QUR'ĀN AND THE AḤĀDĪTH

There are a number of *āyāt* in the Qur'ān and traditions from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ that speak about the *fiṭrah* of a human being. *Fiṭrah* in Arabic literally means 'the way that something has been created.' For example, the *fiṭrah* of cheetahs is to hunt and run fast. The *fiṭrah* of fish is to swim. The *fiṭrah* of giraffes is to eat leaves. The *fiṭrah* of a moose is to graze.

The *fiṭrah* of a human being—in addition to instincts that it shares with animals like the need to eat and survive—is to know and worship God. This also includes a knowledge of why we were created, why we are here in this world, and our purpose after life in this world. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

"So direct your face (self) toward the religion, inclining to the upright faith, (adhere to) the fiṭrah of Allah according to which He created humankind. There is no altering the creations of Allah; that is the upright religion, but most people do not know."[2]

This verse says that every human being has a *fiṭrah*, or a certain way they were created.

In a number of *ḥadīth*, companions of the Imāms ﷺ asked them about the *fiṭrah* that is mentioned in the verse above. The Imāms ﷺ explained that the *fiṭrah* (the way human beings have been created) is the *fiṭrah* of *Tawḥīd*—meaning that they have a natural, innate characteristic of knowing and worshiping One God. In other traditions, they explain the *fiṭrah* as being the *fiṭrah* of Islam—meaning knowing and submitting to One God.

This argument is only useful to people who believe that the Qur'ān is the Word of Allah ﷻ. But for others who are investigating religion, it helps them to know that the Qur'ān speaks about matters like the *fiṭrah* of human beings, meaning how all human beings are created.

STOP AND REFLECT: After watching the above video, why do you think young children are so curious about the world around them? The video mentions that it is easier for a child to potentially understand God more so than they know their own mother. How is this possible?

Hishām ibn Sālim narrates from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ that he asked him about the Qur'ānic verse:

"The fiṭrah of Allah, upon which He created humankind;"

and the Imām ﷺ replied:

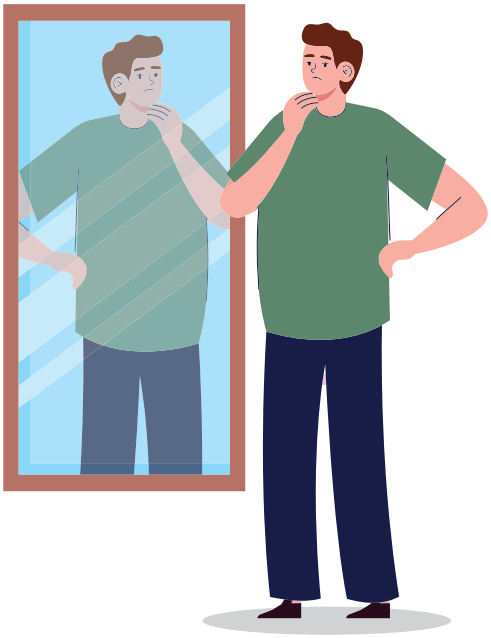
"It is Tawḥīd (Monotheism or the belief in One God)."[3]

3 ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān*, Discussion on Verse 30 of Sūrah ar-Rūm (30).

4. LOOKING WITHIN

Since the knowledge of God and the desire to worship Him are innate to all human beings, just look inside of yourself, and you will be able to find God.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think back to the last time you were in a desperate situation where there seemed to be no way out, what was your immediate instinct? Explain.
Think about a time when you were reflecting on the wonders and beauty of the world around you. Where did your thoughts end up? What about the last time you thought about your own purpose within this amazing world? Explain your thought process.



2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verse 30.

Activity 2.1b: Review Questions

1. Does the inner way involve proving God's existence? Why or why not?

2. Suppose that you, the Muslim, are able to convince Jordan that he is born with knowledge of God. What do you think Jordan's next question will be?

3. Imagine a friend asks you what it means to know God innately. Write a summary of the 'Inner Way of Knowing Allah ﷻ' in text message format (using text abbreviations like imo, idk, etc.) to help your friend understand the important aspects of this lesson. Your entire summary can only be one text message to your friend—160 characters.

2.2 Causes of Alienation from the Fiṭrah

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand three reasons for being alienated from the *fiṭrah* in order to know and worship God.
- Understand the role that actions play in strengthening or weakening one's innate understanding of God.

JORDAN: "You claim that all human beings have this innate nature *(fiṭrah)* meaning they have been created in a way to know and worship God, but I do not see or know God. Does this not mean that I do not have this innate nature within me?"

ME: "All human beings are created with this innate nature *(fiṭrah)*. But this *fiṭrah* can be masked by something else, or in other words, people become alienated from their own *fiṭrah*. Let us look at some examples of how human beings have an innate characteristic or desire, but where it becomes masked by a powerful urge.

1. Parents have a natural desire to love, protect, and take care of their children. However, sometimes they experience challenging situations, where other desires overpower their natural instincts toward their children. For example, one parent can be very angry at the other parent, and take out their anger on the child—directly or indirectly. Or, parents may be embarrassed about their child, to the point where they give their child away to someone else.
2. There are often cases where people walk by someone who is dying, but they do not offer to help them. They are either distracted, scared, or too occupied with their own lives to care about that person, even though there is an internal instinct within human beings to help innocent people when they are in need.

Similarly, the *fiṭrah* to know God and worship Him can be masked for a number of reasons as well, some of which could include the following:

1. Upbringing

The final Messenger ﷺ said: "Everyone is born with a God-seeking *fiṭrah*. It is one's parents who make them a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian…"[1] The Prophet ﷺ is giving an example here that can be applied to parents who raise their children in a way that they end up not caring about God, or even go as far as to deny His very existence.

2. Continued sinning (without seeking forgiveness):

Every action that we do has an effect on our soul. The result of repeated sins without repentance clouds our God-seeking fiṭrah. This is like someone who is trying to drive but there is a lot of fog outside, or the windshield is completely covered with dirt—to the point where they cannot see what is right in front of them. Similarly, committing sins prevents people from seeing those things that should be very natural and easy for them to see.

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, Vol. 2, P. 49.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

"When someone commits a sin, a black spot appears on their [spiritual] heart. If they repent, then it is erased, but if they continue to commit it, then that spot increases and grows until it engulfs the entire heart. After that, they will never be successful."[2]

2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 271.

STOP AND REFLECT: What does this *ḥadīth* above mean in your own words? How would you explain the above *ḥadīth* to a non-Muslim using a real-life example?

3. Distractions

People have limited bandwidth for paying attention to things. When they use that bandwidth for things which are less important or useless, like excessive entertainment, too much gaming, or unnecessary scrolling on the internet, etc., then they do not have room to think or pay attention to those things that are really important, like their innate knowledge of God and the desire to worship Him."

The following verses show how people can be distracted by frivolous entertainment to the point where they become oblivious of the Hereafter and the teachings of the Noble Qurʾān. Allah ﷻ says:

"(The time of) their accounting has drawn near for humankind, yet they are in [their] heedlessness turning away. Whenever any new reminder [verse from the Qurʾān] comes to them from their Lord, they play around while they listen to it. Their hearts are distracted. The wrongdoers secretly whisper together [saying]: 'Is this [man-meaning the Prophet] not a human being like yourselves? Will you be fooled by magic while you have the ability to see through it?'"[3]

Today, our focus and attention span has become even less with a very fast-paced lifestyle, thus it is essential to carve out some time for contemplation and reflection to help increase our focus bandwidth.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verses 1-3.

JORDAN: "So, if I stop paying attention to those things that are not important, I would be able to focus more on those things that are important, and reconnect with my *fiṭrah*? But how can that take place?"

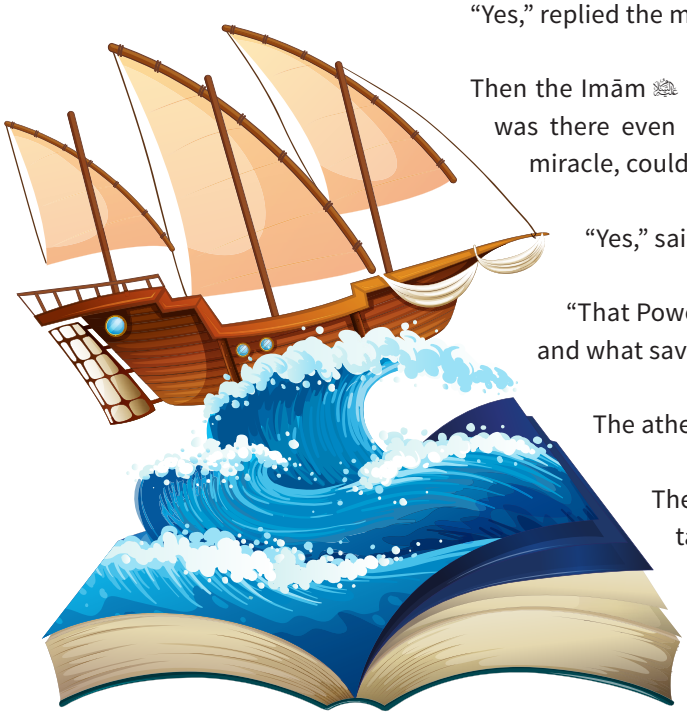
ME: "Yes, by focusing on what is really important, acting on what you know to be good and true, and staying away from what you know to be evil and false, you will find yourself reconnecting with your *fiṭrah*."

STOP AND REFLECT: Is this true for things in your life as well? Give one specific example.

Sometimes, Allah ﷻ will create special opportunities for those people who have disconnected from their knowledge and love of the Almighty to reconnect with Him. These opportunities often come in the form of challenges and trials. In times of great difficulties and trials, distractions melt away, and it is easier for a person to connect to one's *fiṭrah*. The following story illustrates this concept:

An atheist once came to Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ and asked him to convince him of the existence of God [Allah ﷻ]. When the 6th Imām ؑ came to know that the man sailed the seas very often, he asked him: "Have you ever been caught in a fierce storm in the middle of nowhere and thought you were going to drown and lose your life?"

"Yes," replied the man.



Then the Imām ؑ asked him: "And at that time, when there was complete despair, was there even a glimmer of hope that perhaps someone or something, by a miracle, could still save you?"

"Yes," said the man again.

"That Power," continued the Imām ؑ: "in which you had a glimmer of hope, and what saved you, is Allah ﷻ!" [4]

The atheist was an intelligent man. He knew the truth when he heard it.

The Imām ؑ was not talking theoretically about false hope. He was talking about an experience that the man had undergone where he felt that deep connection to Allah ﷻ. When a person has hope in something in a situation of utter desperation—because hope is a two-way connection—there has to be someone on the other end of that connection.

4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 3, P. 41.

This story is an example of what the Qurʾān describes in the following verses:

"Have you not regarded that the ships sail at sea by Allah's blessings, that He may show you some of His signs? There are indeed signs in that for every patient and grateful [servant]. And when waves cover over them like canopies, they invoke Allah, putting exclusive faith in Him." [5]

Even though these challenges and trials are a blessing in disguise, if those affected are not careful, then their effects will be short-lived. That is why the verses continue as follows:

"But when He delivers them toward the land, [only] some of them remain unwavering. And none rejects Our signs except every treacherous and ungrateful one." [6]

ME: "Jordan, what would you do in a situation where there was nowhere to run or hide? For example, being diagnosed with an illness that the doctors have no cure for, or being in a plane that is about to crash. Who do you turn to in such situations? Do you have someone to call out to?"

JORDAN: "I don't really know. Okay, so if someone is distracted and disconnected from their *fiṭrah*, then does their fiṭrah disappear completely?"

ME: "No, the *fiṭrah* cannot ever fully disappear because it is the way everyone is created, and it cannot be changed. It is always present within our minds and hearts, and is the deepest motivation we have. Many of the problems that people face in their lives is due to fighting against this *fiṭrah*, or not acknowledging it. For example, the need to worship something is still present. Sometimes, the types of distractions that are mentioned above turn into addictions. One of the reasons people become addicted to things is because:

- They are created with a need to worship God, but they channel that need into the worship of a "false god."
- They do not feel true satisfaction from worshiping the false god, but they think that by going back to it repeatedly, they will find the satisfaction they are looking for."

JORDAN: "I have one more question. One of the goals of religion is to give you a purpose in life. Religion is supposed to take you closer to God. But if I am born with knowledge of God, then what is the point of following religion?"

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verses 31-32.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verses 31-32.

Activity 2.2a: Reasons for Following Religion

- Independently, come up with five important reasons for following religion.

- In pairs, come up with three of the best choices between you and your partner.

- You and your partner should now join another pair of students. Discuss each of the three choices both groups came up with. Then, all of you together, come up with one of the most important reasons for following religion.

ME: "It is true that you are born with knowledge of God, but that knowledge is like a dim light bulb. Religion teaches us the practices which will brighten that lightbulb, and give deeper knowledge and certainty about God, until someone reaches the point where their knowledge about God is certain, which Islam refers to as the state of *yaqīn*—complete certainty. Religion also identifies those practices that will cause the lightbulb to become dimmer or brighter. Sins against God or against people will make that lightbulb dimmer, but righteous actions will brighten that lightbulb.

An example to help understand this is that of an athlete. Most elite sportspeople are born with a natural talent or disposition for their sport and set of skills. However, this is initially only a potential. It requires years of training, hard work, and lots of effort in order to realize one's potential. It also requires the individual to stay away from things that can negatively affect one's fitness and performance."

Activity 2.2b: Review Questions

1. How much of an effect do you think a person's environment has on their awareness of Allah ﷻ and their desire to worship Him?

2. Give an example of someone (without mentioning any names!) you have seen who—from what you can tell—has been or was affected by one of the *fiṭrah*-masking causes mentioned above. What happened to that person's connection with Allah ﷻ?

3. Give an example of a natural instinct or desire (other than what is mentioned in this lesson) that human beings suppress because of some other cause.

Activity 2.2b: Review Questions (Continued)

4. Look up Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 65 and:

   a. Write out its translation.

   b. How does this verse show that a human being's nature is to know Allah ﷻ and worship Him by calling upon Him when one is in need?

   c. Other than the scene described in this verse, name another scenario in which someone could experience a similar feeling or circumstance.

5. Look up the story of Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ in Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verses 76-69.

   a. What is the primary reason why Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ said that he cannot worship a star?

   b. How can you apply that reason to answer why someone will not be able to find satisfaction if they are worshiping false gods?

6. Look up Sūrah al-Ḥijr (15), Verse 99.

   a. Write out its translation.

   b. How does this verse show that religion is important in increasing one's awareness of Allah ﷻ?

7. Look up Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 151.

   a. Write out its translation.

   b. What does this verse tell us about the teachings of religions?

2.3 The Outer Way of Knowing God

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Outline the two basic premises for the Argument from Design and its conclusion, and provide evidence for the basis of both premises.
- Discuss common objections to the Argument, and potential responses to those objections.
- Explain how human-made inventions are not exempt from the general Argument.

JORDAN: "I'm convinced now that every human being is born with knowledge of God, but for some people—due to various reasons—they are masked from that knowledge. Is there any way that such people can come to know God again?"

ME: "Yes, there are two other ways of knowing God. Let's talk about the Outer Way of knowing Him."

JORDAN: "What is the Outer Way of establishing the existence of God?"

REVIEW: As a class, review student answers from the brainstorming activity completed in Lesson 2.1 - The Inner Way of Knowing God.

ME: "The Outer Way is to use a combination of observation and reasoning, or pure reasoning, to logically establish the existence of God. Once someone is logically convinced about His existence, then they can worship Him and become more aware of Him.

This is different from the Inner Way of knowing God, which is to look within and realize that we have all been created in a way that we already know Him. However, just like the Inner Way of knowing God relies on our intuitive awareness of Him (our *fiṭrah*), the Outer Way also depends on the *fiṭrah*, but a different aspect of it. This aspect allows us to understand certain things intuitively, and be convinced of the truth through the use of logical arguments and proofs.

We will now look at the example of such an argument, which is called the Argument from Design."

ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

Premise 1: Everything that has any kind of design requires a designer.

The "complexity" in the design means that:

a) The parts have design.

b) The parts work together in harmony for a common goal.

This complexity requires that the designer:

a) Not be part of the designed thing itself.

b) Have intelligence and awareness to plan the design, and the capability to put it all together.

A simple example: Imagine you come across a device, like a clock or a cellphone. Since the device has a certain type of design—design in its individual parts, harmony among the different parts, everything working to accomplish a common goal, etc.—we know that there must have been a designer behind this finished product.

Another example: Imagine there is a beautifully drawn peacock on your classroom board. If someone were to walk into that room, they might comment: "Who drew that? What a talented drawer they must be! How much knowledge of drawing and art that person must have!" What then about the real peacock that struts and eats and makes noise in real life? Is there no creator for that?!

Premise 2: This universe has a very complex design.

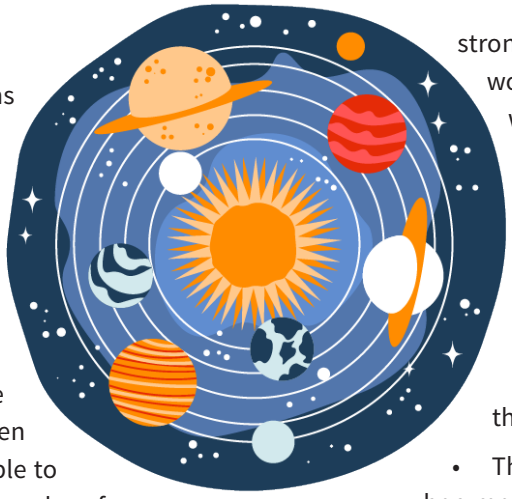
It would be useful to spend time pondering on different examples of design in the universe around us:

Sunrise and Sunset:
The times for these can be calculated for thousands of years in advance. This shows a sophisticated and precise design.

Design of Planets and Other Bodies in the Solar System:
Everything has been arranged in a certain way such that if it was disrupted by even the minutest amount, then chaos would ensue. For example, if the temperature in the atmosphere were to rise by 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit (3 degrees Celsius),[1] or if Earth was slightly closer to or further away from the sun, etc., then life would completely cease to exist.

1 https://www.livescience.com/climate-change-humans-extinct.html

Fundamental Constants:



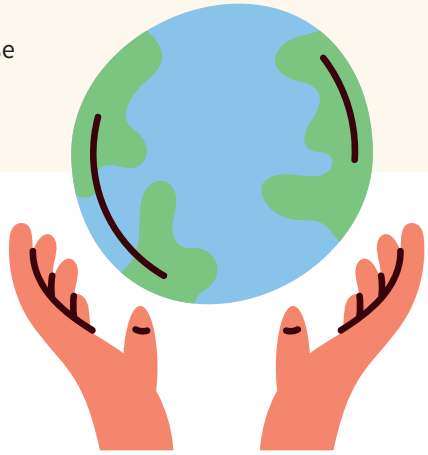
From galaxies and stars, down to atoms and subatomic particles, the structure of our universe is determined by certain fundamental constants. Scientists have come to the conclusion that these constants have been established to a very precise value that allows life to exist in the universe. If these constants were to be altered even in the slightest way, then no physical interactive life would be able to exist anywhere. Let us look at some examples of these constants:

- Physicists have discovered a number they call the **fine-structure constant** that has a value close to 1/137. If it were even slightly different, closer to 1/138 say, then elemental carbon could not form in our universe, and life as we know it could not exist. But no theory predicts the value of this fine-structure constant—it has to be measured. When measured, the value just happens to be exactly what it should be for life to exist.[2]
- The strength of **gravity**, when measured against the strength of **electromagnetism**, is fine-tuned for life. If gravity had been absent or substantially weaker, then galaxies, stars, and planets would not have formed in the first place. Had it been only slightly weaker (and/or electromagnetism slightly stronger), then the main star which is the sun would have been significantly colder and would not have exploded in supernovae, which are the source of many of the elements necessary for life. If in contrast, gravity had been slightly stronger, then the stars would have formed from smaller amounts of material and would have been much more short-lived. They would not have survived long enough for the universe to exist as it does today.
- The strength of the **strong nuclear force**, when measured against that of **electromagnetism**, is fine-tuned for life. The strong nuclear force is one of the four fundamental forces in nature. It is responsible for binding together the most basic particles in nature. Very small deviations in the strong nuclear force would have meant that the amount of carbon and oxygen in stars would have been different, and this would have been fatal for life.
- The expansion rate of the universe. In 1998, scientists discovered that the universe is slowly expanding. The rate of the expansion of the universe is driven by a value called the **Cosmological Constant**. Scientists have come to know that a change as small as $1{:}10^{120}$ in this constant value would cause the universe to expand too rapidly or too slowly. In both scenarios, the universe would not be life-permitting.[3]

▷ * $1{:}10^{120}$ means 0.00000…(120 zeros)...001

CONCLUSION

Therefore, there is an All-Knowing and Absolutely Perfect Designer for this universe who is intelligent, aware of the design, and capable of putting it all together.



2 https://physicsworld.com/a/physicists-measure-the-fine-structure-constant-directly-for-the-first-time/
3 https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fine-tuning/#FineTuneCons

Activity 2.3a: Nature Scavenger Hunt

This can be a class activity or an independent assignment.

1. Take a walk in nature. What complex designs do you see?

2. From your list above, choose one thing to take a deeper look into. Explore its complexity, and draw an image—as detailed of it as possible—in the space below. Be sure to label all of the parts. How is each one necessary for its survival?

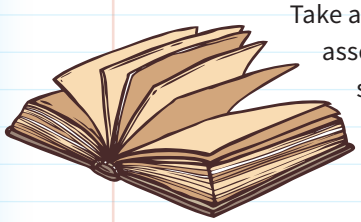
Activity 2.3a: Nature Scavenger Hunt (Continued)

3. How do your observations support the premise that God exists because of the complex design of the universe?

ARGUMENT VS. PROOF

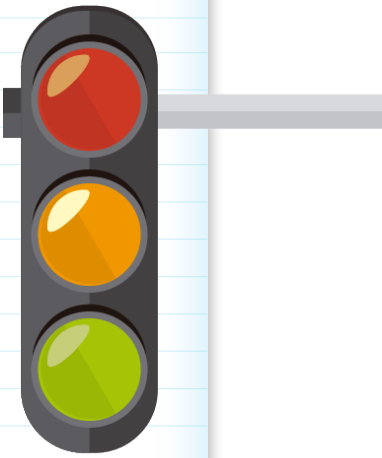
JORDAN: "The universe has been around for a long time. There might be a designer for it, but could it not just be the product of a random assortment of things put together in a certain way?"

ME: "Yes, indeed. Logically speaking there is a possibility that it came all together by chance; however, this possibility is so low that most people would not even take it into consideration. Let us look at a few examples:



Take a sentence made up of words. If those words were cut up and randomly assembled, it would take a few tries before you were able to form a sentence. Now if you were to take a book, it would take much longer for the book to be formed randomly. The chances would be so low that it would be very unlikely for the book to be assembled again properly.

Or for example, if a windstorm were to sweep through a junkyard, what is the chance that the result of the storm would be a 737 Max jet?



Scientific experiments always have a margin of error associated with them. There is always a probability that the results scientists see are not accurate, even if that probability is very small. Yet, they are able to derive important theories on the basis of these same experiments.

We actually come to many definitive conclusions in life based on this type of thinking about probability. For example, when we stop at a red traffic light, or pass through a green light without stopping, then there is a possibility that the traffic light system was hacked or mis-programmed and it should actually have shown a different colored light. But we can only function as a society if we ignore that possibility.

It is possible for these occurrences to happen randomly, but almost everyone would discard that possibility because the chance is so low.

This is why the Argument of Design is called an argument and not a proof. Even though it is not a proof, it uses a type of evidence that we must follow for most aspects of our lives. Since the probability of a designer is so high in this argument, the argument provides very strong evidence. It is sufficient for someone to start believing in the existence of a Divine Designer for the universe, which will eventually help them to believe in God."

HUMAN INVENTIONS

JORDAN: "So you are saying that everything that is complex in this world has a designer outside of the world itself. However, there are so many complex products that human beings have made, like the railroad system, computers, military defense systems, space exploration programs, etc. The designers of such products are human beings, so are human beings… god-like?"

ME: "Even when it comes to "human-made creations," we see the role of a Designer other than a human being. Let us ponder over the below points:

1. For every complex thing that human beings design, we have to ask the question: Who designed the human being who designed these things? For example, the human brain is an amazing machine whose complexity is still not understood. So who designed this brain?
2. When human beings "create" things, they do so according to certain laws that are in place in the universe, for example: electromagnetism, gravity, torque, and using properties of elements that are present in the universe (like metals and silicon). These laws and elements are themselves designed by someone other than human beings.

So whenever there is an object that human beings have "designed," it is better to say that they "fashioned" it, like a potter fashions a clay pot, not that they designed it from scratch."

Activity 2.3b: Dialogue

How would you explain the above point to a younger sibling or a child? Create a dialogue you might have with them explaining why every human creation is attributed to God. Use the rubric below to guide you.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes in the dialogue.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles mentioned in the lesson.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however, there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Dialogue lacked organization and cohesiveness.	Dialogue was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more.	Dialogue was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked cohesiveness.	Dialogue was presented in an engaging and catching way in terms of content and cohesiveness.
Quality	Content presented was neither convincing, nor compelling.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose, and lacked quality.	Content presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Content presented was extremely compelling and convincing.

In the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ relates even human "inventions" to Himself, and lists them as signs of His Wisdom:

"It is Allah ﷻ who created the heavens and the earth, and He sends down water from the sky, and with it He brings forth crops for your sustenance. And He made the ships subservient [for your benefit] so that they may sail at sea by His command, and He disposed the rivers for you." [4]

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 32.

Activity 2.3c: Review Questions

1. The Argument from Design makes use of a combination of observations and reasoning.

   a. Which part of the Argument makes use of observations?

   b. Which part of the Argument makes use of reasoning?

2. In this Argument, why does the designer have to be outside of the thing that is being designed? People use computers to design computers; so why can something which has a complex design, not design itself?

Activity 2.3c: Review Questions (Continued)

3. Give an example of an impressive, complex design in the natural world. Explain why its design is complex.

4. Examples of design mentioned in the Qurʾān:
   a. Look up Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verses 2-4.
   b. Write down the translation.

   c. What specific examples of design are being mentioned in the above verses?

   d. How would the altering or any of these designs change life as we know it?

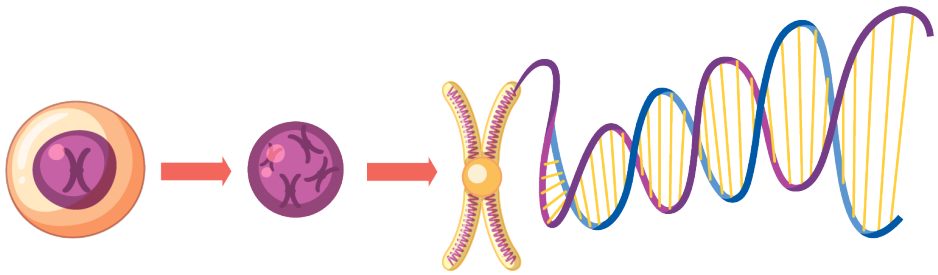
5. Create a Bumper Sticker summarizing what the Argument from Design is. Include a short, respectful slogan, to help convey what it means to know Allah ﷻ outwardly.

2.4 Objections to Argument from Design

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Critically express why the Theory of Evolution is not in conflict with the Argument from Design.
- Familiarize ourselves with the scope of the Argument from Design: What it establishes, and what it does not establish; but why it is still a significant argument for its ability to impact the heart and connect people to their *fiṭrah*.



Activity 2.4a: Anticipation Guide

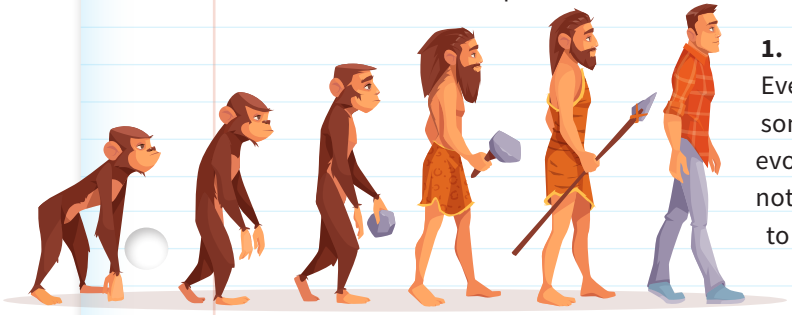
Before reading this lesson, complete the anticipation guide below to the best of your abilities.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	EXPLANATION
The Theory of Evolution provides the most logical rationale for why the universe exists the way it does.			
The more we come to know about the universe, the more we realize how little we really know.			
It is important to understand the design of this world around us in order to awaken our *fiṭrah*.			

OBJECTIONS TO THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

JORDAN: "In the second premise of the Argument from Design, you stated that the universe has a complex design. However, we all know that the universe came to be the way it is through a process of evolution. Evolution is a theory which states that life began with a single cell organism and through a process of microevolution, macroevolution, and natural selection, that cell evolved into a more complex being, and so forth until the most complex of living organisms—the human being—was formed. Therefore, there is no complex design. There were just some basic elements, and through the process of evolution, the complexity that we see around us came to exist. Since there is no complex design, there is no designer!"

ME: "The Argument from Design is not incompatible with evolution, meaning that it is possible for both to be acceptable. But there are some things that need to be noted about this topic:



1. The Theory of Evolution is just a theory. Even though there is convincing evidence for some types of microevolution, as a whole, evolution (and particularly macroevolution) is not a proven scientific fact. It gives explanation to why there is similarity among living beings, and why certain species exist and others do not, but it is not the only explanation for how things came to be. Evidence that is sometimes used to argue for macroevolution, such as different species having differing bone structures that are best suited for their needs, can also be used to argue for the design of a Wise Creator.

2. Let us say that the Theory of Evolution is an established fact, and objects in the natural universe around us came to be the way they are due to an evolutionary process. It would explain how different living things came to be—but it does not answer why these rules are in place (survival of the fittest, microevolution, and macroevolution), and how it all started. Who created the first subatomic particles and atoms? There would still need to be a maker and designer who made use of these processes to design the universe.

3. According to the Qurʾān, a human being consists of not only a body, but also a soul. After describing the physical creation of a human being, Allah ﷻ says: *"…then We brought them to life, as a different creature,"* [1] meaning that after creating the body, Allah ﷻ created the soul. So, it is possible that the human body could have been created through an evolutionary process, and the soul was created by God, installed into the body after the body was advanced enough, and the result was the first human being, Prophet Ādam ﷺ. However, this is a stretch. If evolution is actually established, then it is more likely that the human being was created through a separate process."

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muʾminūn (23), Verse 14.

THINK, PAIR, WRITE

Take a few minutes to think about the above response. How does the Argument from Design differ from the Theory of Evolution? Does everything need to have a complex design for the Argument from Design to be true?
Discuss this with your partner, then write what you think is the biggest difference between the Argument from Design and the Theory of Evolution, and why the former is more logical than the latter.

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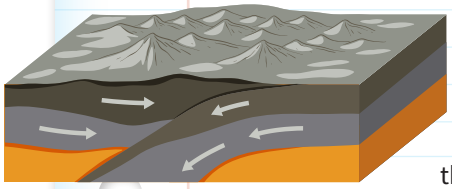
JORDAN: "I have some objections to the Argument from Design:

1. It shows the existence of a Designer, but you were supposed to be proving God. How are the two related? Who designed the Designer of the universe? Who created Him?
2. It shows the existence of a Designer, but does not prove that the Designer is the Creator.
3. There are many examples in the world around us of complex design. Yet we can also find examples of phenomena that seem to be random—without purpose and design. No one can accurately predict when an earthquake is going to take place. When it does take place, it causes destruction, loss of life, and great difficulties. How can you say that such a random and destructive event is part of a complex design?"

ME: "Let me answer these questions of yours as follows:

1. All of these objections are valid, but only to a certain extent. This Argument from Design, in its simple form, is not meant to prove everything about the existence of God. It shows the existence of an Intelligent and Capable Designer. But we can use it as a basis to show more about the Designer—that the Designer is the Creator and has not been created. The reason is that the intricacy and profundity of the design of this universe is so interwoven into the act of creation that the two cannot be separate. We will discuss more about the Designer being the Creator later on, if God permits.
2. The Argument from Design has given us a lot. It is an extremely effective way of waking up the heart and putting us in touch with our innate nature *(fiṭrah)*, which is aware of God's existence.
3. There are two responses to this objection:
   - First of all: Just because we do not see the design in something, that does not mean it does not exist. At an initial glance, it seems that earthquakes are random. Actually, they are a form of releasing trapped energy due to the movement of tectonic plates underneath the earth's surface. The full knowledge of why they take place could be something that scientists have yet to discover. So, something that seems random might actually be designed with purpose.



   - Secondly: Let us say that some part of the universe does not have a complex design. The Argument still holds, because it establishes the existence of a Designer who is capable, aware, and intelligent for that part of the universe which does have a complex design.

The Argument from Design is one of the most effective ways of awakening one's *fiṭrah*. The Noble Qur'ān and the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ make use of this argument when talking to people about God. It is also useful for believers as a way of reminding themselves about Allah ﷻ. For example, Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

"Most surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits humankind, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky, giving life with it to the earth after its death, and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand." [2]

2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 164.

Often Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, after completing his Ṣalātul Layl, would say:

"I testify that the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them, are signs that point toward You, and evidence that testifies to what You have invited to. Everything acts as a proof of You and testifies to Your Lordship, and is branded by the marks of Your blessings, and the signs of Your Wise Management." [3]

I will next introduce you to a stronger, more complicated argument to establish the existence of One God who is the Creator and Designer of all."

3 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, Vol. 3, P. 434.

Activity 2.4b: Review Questions

1. How is it possible for both the Theory of Evolution and the Argument from Design to be correct?

2. For a long time, scientists used to say that the appendix plays no role in the human body, and that there is no harm in removing it. But over the last few years, they have discovered that it does indeed have a purpose.

APPENDIX MAY HAVE IMPORTANT FUNCTION

https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/01/170109162333.htm

a. Read this article: "Appendix may have important functions", then summarize it in bullet point format, including a few of the potential benefits of the appendix.

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b. Fifty years ago—before this and other newer research which shows some potential benefits of the appendix—would it have been correct to say that the human body does not have intelligent design, because if it did, then all of the organs (including the appendix) would have a purpose? Why or why not?

Activity 2.4b: Review Questions (Continued)

c. How would you apply this logic to the design of the universe?

3. Revisit your answers to the Anticipation Guide at the beginning of this lesson; then complete it again below. Have any of your answers/explanations changed?

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NEW EXPLANATION
The Theory of Evolution provides the most logical rationale for why the universe exists the way it does.			
The more we come to know about the universe, the more we realize how little we know.			
It is important to understand the design of this world around us in order to awaken our *fiṭrah*.			

If you filled out both Anticipation Guides identically, explain why below:

4. Create a catchy newspaper headline capturing the essence of this lesson to replace the current title. Your headline must be:
   a. Between 5-10 words
   b. Accurate and specific
   c. Do not use any conjunctions (such as i.e., and) or articles (a, an, the)
      ▷ Use commas to substitute conjunctions.

CHAPTER 3

Attributes of Allah ﷻ

3.1 God's Attributes

3.1 God's Attributes

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain how the Attributes and Actions of Allah ﷻ are the major point of difference in the understanding of God among different religious traditions.
- Provide a logical argument to establish that Allah ﷻ is not composed of different parts; and that He is absolutely perfect.
- Provide a logical argument to establish the Oneness of God in Being and Creation.
- Define, compare, and contrast *Rabb* (Lord or Nurturer) and *al-Khāliq* (the Creator), and between being a *Rabb* in *Tashrīʿ* vs. a *Rabb* in *Takwīn*.
- Explain the implications of Allah ﷻ being the *Rabb* (Nurturer) and the *Ilāh* (Deity or God), and the deeper meaning of the statement *'lā ilāha illallāh.'*

ATTRIBUTES AND ACTIONS OF ALLAH ﷻ

JORDAN: "Okay, so now I am convinced about the existence of a Being who is Needless of any other beings, and whose very existence comes from Himself. But what does that have to do with proving the existence of God?"

ME: "Well, that being is God! The name 'Allah' is what Muslims use to call upon Him. Arabic speaking Christians and Jews also refer to Him as Allah. Now, you could use another term to describe that same Being, for example, Jews refer to Him as 'Yahweh,' and other religions have different terms for Him (in Hinduism it is Supreme Brahman, worshiped in the form of Vishnu or Shiva). The word a person uses to call Him may differ, but what is crucial is understanding who He is. In order to understand who **He is**, we have to understand (to the limited extent that we can) what Qualities and Attributes He has, and how He does what He does. This is where Islam differs from other religions which accept God (however they call Him)—they accept the existence of God, but they differ when it comes to His Attributes and His Actions—how He is and how He does what He does."

JORDAN: "Okay, tell me more about God. What are His Attributes?"

ME: "Up until now, we have understood that this God is Needless of any other being. Now we are going to show another Attribute of Allah ﷻ, which is that He is not—in His Essence—composed of different parts. Here is the proof for this:

If God were composed of different parts, then He would have needed someone else to put Him together in order for Him to exist.

But God is Needless of all other beings to exist.

Therefore He is not composed of different parts."

JORDAN: "Okay, that makes sense—God is not composed of different parts. So what is next?"

ME: "God is absolutely Perfect, meaning that He has every good Attribute that could possibly exist. The proof for this is as follows:

Let us say that God had a subset of good Attributes—called ABCD—but was lacking another Attribute E.

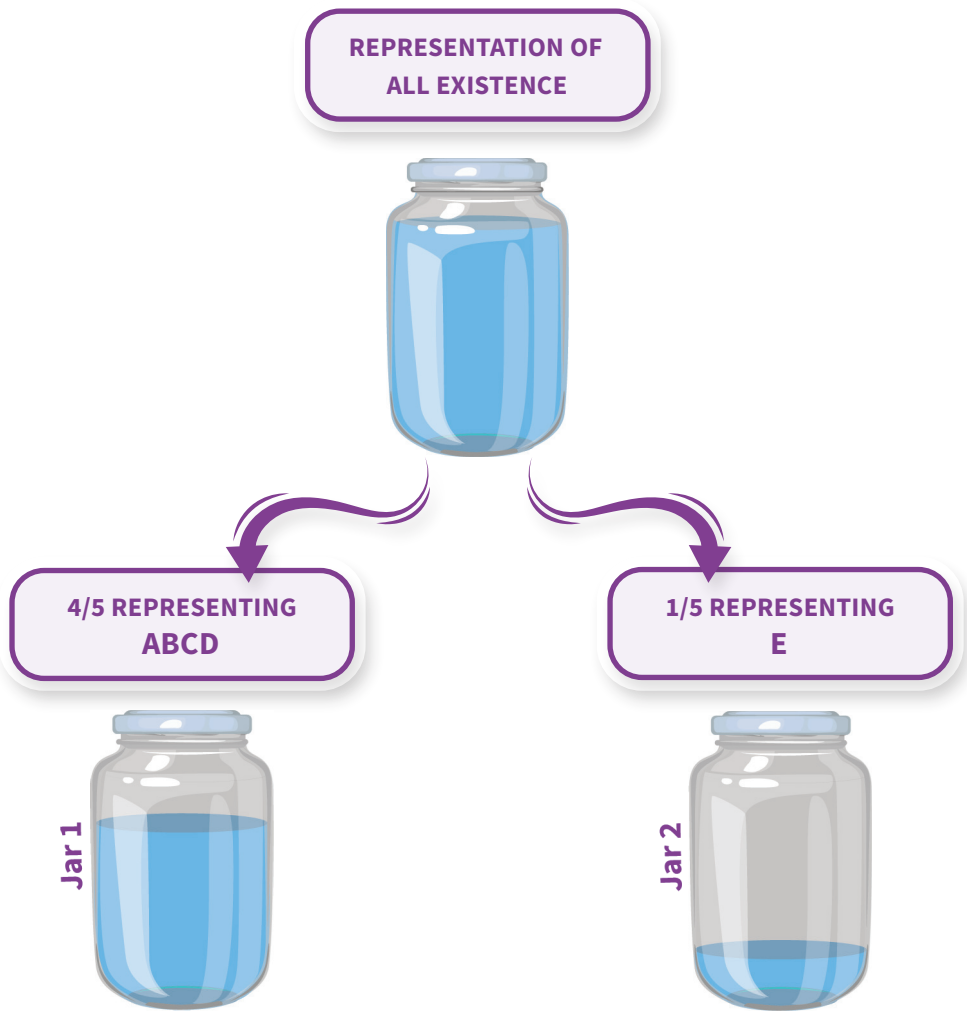
This would mean that God had to be composed in a way that:

a) He exists, because we have already shown that existence is His Essence, like saltiness is the essence of salt; and

b) His existence is limited to ABCD.

This would mean that He has two different parts: His existence, and His limited Attributes (ABCD).

But God is not composed of different parts. He has every good Attribute and He is Perfect."



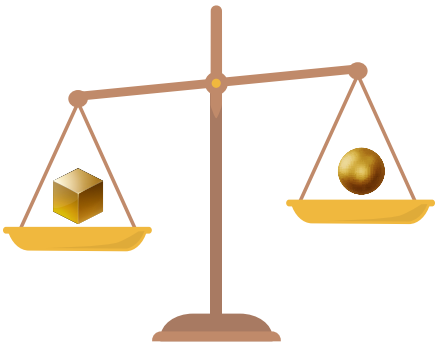
NOTE: It might help you to visualize this by imagining two jars that are identical in size. One of the jars is full of water, and represents all of existence. This jar is then poured into the other jar but only 4/5 of the way, with 4/5 representing ABCD and 1/5 representing E. Jar 2 now "exists" but in a limited way, and it had to be composed in that way.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can this visualization help you better understand why Allah ﷻ cannot have just a subset of Attributes, but rather the fact that He has every good Attribute?

JORDAN: "Simple, yet powerful proof. Okay, so God is Perfect! Now what is next?"

ME: "God is One. The Oneness of Allah ﷻ, Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*, is a very deep concept and can be applied to a number of different areas or levels.

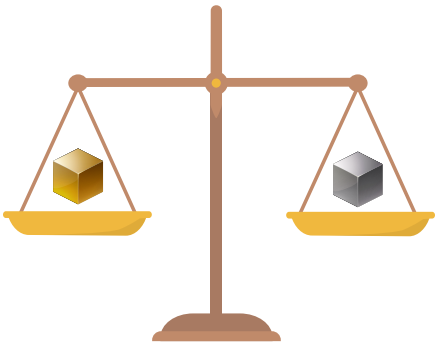
FIRST LEVEL OF MONOTHEISM (TAWḤĪD): THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD (NEEDLESS BEING)



The first level of *Tawḥīd* is to establish that Allah ﷻ is One in terms of being a single Needless Being, who is a single God, as opposed to there being multiple gods.

Let us analyze if we were to say that there are two Gods—both Needless Beings who are perfect—then either they are both different, or they are both the same."

If we were to say that they are both different, then that means one of them has something the other one does not have. But not having something means that they are imperfect. But God is perfect. Therefore the one that is lacking something cannot be God.



If we were to say that they are both the exact same, then actually they are not two, but they are one and the same. We have imagined that they are different, but in actuality they are the same being.

Therefore, in either case, we established the fact that there cannot be two Needless beings. A Needless Being can only be One, just like a child's actual birth mother can only be one—you cannot even conceive of there being a second."

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Suppose that God were to create another being and that being had all the goodness that God has. Would that other being be a second god? Why or why not?

JORDAN: "Okay, so God is the One and Only Needless Being who is absolutely Perfect and is not Composite. What is next then?"

ME: "God is the Creator. In Arabic, the word used for the Creator is *al-Khāliq* (الخالق). We have actually already shown this as part of the Cosmological Argument. Creatures who are needy of being given existence have to receive their existence from a Being who is completely Needless. "Being created" is another way of saying "receiving existence." Since God is the **only** Needless Being, everything else is needy, and therefore, He is the Creator of everything."

JORDAN: "What about things that human beings create?"

ME: "Human beings can be "creators" (with a small 'c') of certain things, but not the Creator of everything for two reasons:

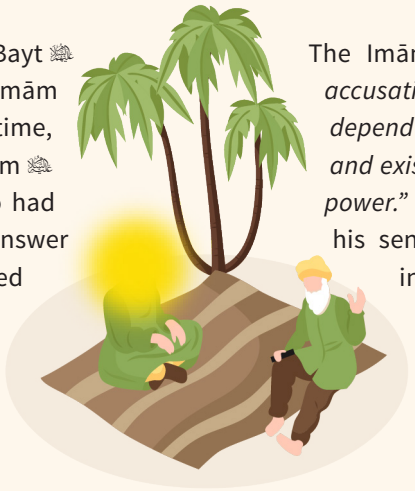
1. Human beings who "create" something are not actually creating that thing from scratch. They assemble, mix, fashion, and compose substances which already exist. However, Allah ﷻ is *al-Badīʿ* which means 'the One who originally brought into existence.' Therefore, whatever human beings may "create," they are making use of those things which Allah ﷻ created in the first place.
2. A human creator may fashion something together, but then is no longer essential to that creation afterward. For example, a builder will build a building, but then walk away from that. A watchmaker builds a watch, winds it up, and it continues to work by itself without the watchmaker needing to be there to watch over it. Steve Jobs invented the iPhone, but has now passed away.

It is true that some human creations—like a sophisticated engineering laboratory, or a nuclear power plant—require constant supervision and maintenance. But maintenance and supervision require expertise which can be provided by different groups of people who may not even have been involved in the initial construction and assembly.

A true Creator however, provides existence at the beginning, and is needed at all times to continue to provide that existence, without which that created thing would cease to exist.

There is a special Name of Allah ﷻ which is *ar-Rabb* (الربّ) that is used to describe how He not only creates, but is in complete charge of His creations and is with them at every moment of their existence. *Ar-Rabb* is the Nurturer of the entire universe—the One who is in charge of everything and looks after it at all times. One of the ways we can try to understand this is by picturing something in our mind. The moment we get distracted, the picture is gone, and we have to try again to recreate it. The need of that mental picture for our attention is constant. It is the same way when it comes to our need for existence that Allah ﷻ is always providing. The nature of His creations is different from someone who creates something in this world. He fully owns every aspect of His creations, and in order for it to come to existence and continue to exist, He needs to continue sustaining it. Our need for Allah ﷻ now is the same amount as it was at the beginning of our creation. Each and every second of our lives, we need Him—the way a tent needs its poles, or the way a lighted lamp needs a power source—rather, our state of neediness to Him is even deeper, and much more intense than those examples.

Once there was an enemy of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ who made a false accusation against Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ to the caliph of the time, al-Manṣūr. Al-Manṣūr summoned the Imām ﷺ to his court, showed him the man who had accused him and asked the Imām ﷺ to answer to the accusation. The 6th Imām ﷺ turned to the accuser, and asked him if he would be willing to take an oath as a means of verifying the accusation. The man agreed.



The Imām ﷺ then asked him to say: *"If my accusation is false, then I am no longer going to depend on the Power of Allah to keep me alive and exist, and I will instead depend on my own power."* Before the accuser even completed his sentence, his life was taken away! This incident is a real-life example of how human beings—without the constant attention of their *Rabb*—are not able to stay alive or even continue to exist for a moment.[1]

1 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 6, P. 446.

Allah ﷻ is in charge because He is the One who created everything and has complete ownership of His creations. He is in charge in two ways:

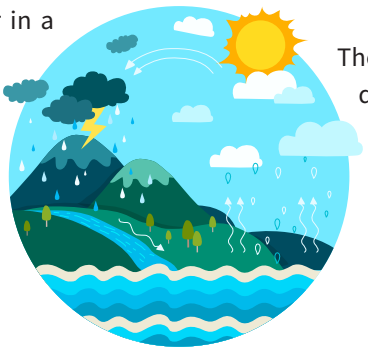
1. Takwīn (التّكوين):

He creates things in a particular way and guides them on a certain path that He has intended for them. Due to that, there are natural laws in place in this world, such as our need for air, food, sun, and rain; the system of life and death; the laws of gravity; and the change of seasons.

Allah ﷻ is not only a *Rabb* of *Takwīn*, but He is the only One *Rabb* of *Takwīn*. The reason for this is the following:

Let us say that there were multiple *Rabbs* in the universe, each one in charge of their own kingdoms. For example, a *Rabb* of human beings and animals, and a separate *Rabb* for plants and water. Or a *Rabb* for everything on the ground, and another for everything in the sea. Or a *Rabb* for the daytime and another one for the night.

If this were the case, then it would mean that there would be a noticeable difference in the way things work in our universe. But when we look at the world around us, we see that everything works together in a seamless fashion. Animals, plants, changing of the days and nights, the planets, the oceans, and the seas—everything is part of a complex system that is run by One entity, not multiple entities. Therefore, there must be only **One** *Rabb* in *Takwīn*.



2. Tashrīʿ (التّشريع):

Some of Allah's creations have been created with free will, but since He is the One who provides them with that free will, He also has the right to tell them what to do with it. The One who created those entities knows them best, and knows what the goals of their existence is. He is the One who is most qualified to set the boundaries, outline what is allowed and what is not allowed, who should be the leaders, how societies should function, etc.

Allah ﷻ is not only a *Rabb* of *Tashrīʿ*, but He is the only One *Rabb* of *Tashrīʿ*, meaning that He is the only One who has the right to (independently) determine what human beings should and should not do. One may question why is this the case? Some reasons include:

a) He is the One who created human beings, and knows and owns everything.

b) He is the One who knows best what everyone needs, and what goals they were created to achieve.

Therefore, no one else except for Him has the right to determine what everything in creation should and should not do."

STOP AND REFLECT: Does the same thing apply for an invention made by a human being? Is the person who made that invention the only one who would know what is best for the function of that object? Give a real life example.

JORDAN: "So Allah is the One and only Needless Being, Creator, Nourisher…what else?"

ME: "The last Attribute of Allah ﷻ that we will cover is that He is the *Ilāh* - الٰه, meaning the One who is worshiped. When we call upon God as *Ilāh*, we are saying that not only is He the Needless Being who creates, provides existence to everything, and is in charge as the *Rabb*, but He is also the One who is worshiped and obeyed."

JORDAN: "Why do we need to worship Him? Is it not enough just to acknowledge that He is the *Rabb*? Surely, He should not be in need of our worship!"

ME: "When we understand that our need of Allah ﷻ is always there and is very deep, then we have to demonstrate that need by worshiping Him because worshiping Him will demonstrate that internal need that we have. The benefits of worshiping Him are for us—not that He is in need of it—because worshiping Him is one of the ways to arrive at the goal that He has set out for us.

The definition of worship is to 'submit to Allah ﷻ in our hearts by accepting Him as the One who is our Nurturer, and who is independently in charge of us (our *Rabb*), and to follow what He has commanded us to do.'

The fifth level of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*—other than Allah ﷻ being the only Needless Being, the One Creator, the One *Rabb* in *Takwīn*, and the One *Rabb* in *Tashrī*—is that He is the One and only entity worthy of being worshiped. This is a deeper meaning of the Islamic slogan of *Tawḥīd* which is: *lā ilāha illallāh* (لا إلٰه الّا الله). Sometimes people understand this to mean that there is no god except Allah, but a deeper and more precise understanding is that there is no entity worthy of worship except Allah."

Activity 3.1a: Review Questions

1. Is Allah ﷻ also the Creator of things that have been created by human beings? Why or why not?

2. Explain in your own words the proof for why Allah ﷻ is Perfect.

3. Give a practical example from daily life (other than the examples provided in this lesson) about where we can observe that Allah ﷻ is the *Rabb* of *Takwīn*.

4. Give a practical example from the daily life of a Muslim where one is tested regarding the belief that Allah ﷻ is the *Rabb* of *Tashrīʿ*.

5. What is the difference between explaining *lā ilāha illallāh* to mean "There is no god except Allah" vs. "There is no entity worthy of worship except Allah"?

CHAPTER 4

Justice

4.1 Justice of God

4.2 Free Will and Predetermination

4.3 Knowledge of God and Predetermination

4.4 Eternal Punishment

4.5 Differences in Creation

4.1 Justice of God

OBJECTIVES

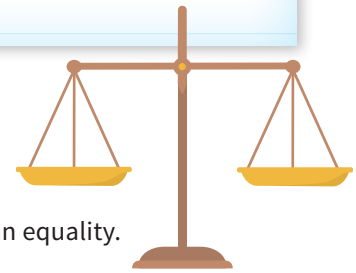
WE WILL:

- Define justice in the context of theological discussions.
- Compare and contrast justice and equality.
- Provide a logical argument for establishing the Justice of God.
- Provide a counter argument to God's Justice (and existence) based on the existence of evil.
- Explain the justification for the presence of evil in light of the Justice of Allah ﷻ.

JORDAN: "Thank you for that explanation about some of the Attributes of God. When we started talking about His Attributes, you mentioned that Islam differs from other religions when it comes to both His Attributes and His Actions. Please tell me more about His Actions."

ME: "A primary focus in Islamic beliefs relating to God's actions is that everything He does, He does in a way that is just and fair. Justice means 'putting everything in its right place, and giving everyone their due rights.' It does not necessarily mean equality. Justice takes into account what everything deserves, whereas equality does not necessarily take that into account."

Activity 4.1a: Illustrate It!



This lesson mentions that justice does not necessarily mean equality.

1. Define justice in your own words.

2. Define equality in your own words.

3. How are justice and equality different?

4. Create an illustration of what the following means: Justice does not mean equality.

Sometimes, being fair is being equal. At other times, being equal is an act of injustice. Examples include giving every student the same grade despite their effort vs. giving everyone a chair at the table.

JORDAN: "Why is Divine Justice so emphasized in Islam?"

ME: "Divine Justice *('Adl)* is so important that it is one of the five pillars of religion (which is called *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* in Arabic). *Uṣūl* (أصول) is the plural of *'aṣl'* (أصل) which means 'root' or 'pillar.' An *'Aṣl ad-Dīn'* is a pillar of faith, meaning a belief that is so important that without it, faith has no meaning."

STOP AND REFLECT: What would religion without justice be like? Would it still be one that sets the tone for a God-centric, calm, and peaceful lifestyle for individuals and for society as a whole?

JUSTICE AS A CORE PRINCIPLE

Why is justice one of the fundamental principles in the Islamic belief system? Some reasons for this include:

a) Other principles of faith—like Prophethood and the Hereafter—depend on the Justice of Allah ﷻ. If Allah ﷻ was not Just, then He may have sent Prophets (God forbid) who taught or said things that were not correct or true. They may have told us to do things which do not actually have any benefits. They may have said things, but then acted in another way. If Allah ﷻ was not Just, then we would not have been able to believe in the promises of the Hereafter; He may have promised a good-doer Heaven, but then change His mind when the time comes.

b) It distinguishes the Shī'ah beliefs from the beliefs of some of the other schools of thought within Islam. Some say that justice is defined by Allah's actions, meaning that even if He was to put a Prophet of His into the fire of Hell, that would be fine and just. However, Shī'ah Muslims believe that Allah ﷻ would never do that because He has set it as a condition upon Himself to act in a just manner, and has given everyone the capability to understand what justice is in each situation. Therefore, we cannot impose upon Allah ﷻ what justice is; rather, He imposes it upon Himself, but has given humanity an understanding of what justice is.

c) In the Qur'ān, Allah ﷻ emphasizes justice numerous times. It is so important to Allah ﷻ that the "Maintainer of Justice" is one of the Names which He uses to describe Himself: *"Allah bears witnesses that there is no god except Him, and [so do] the angels and those who possess knowledge—[that He is] the Maintainer of Justice; there is no deity except Him, the Almighty, and the All-Wise."* [1]

And when He describes the fate of disobedient nations of the past who brought destruction upon themselves, He says: *"And We did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves…"* [2]

In another verse, Allah ﷻ states that He does things so fairly that no one will be wronged even by the amount of a speck on a date.[3]

d) The Prophet ﷺ and the pure Imāms ﷺ emphasized the principle of justice greatly.

e) Understanding and believing fully in the Justice of Allah ﷻ can be an extremely important way of solving many problems that come up in life. For example, when we face a difficulty like losing a loved one, or have a severe illness in our bodies, or are treated unjustly in this world, then believing in the Justice of Allah ﷻ gives us the assurance that we will be compensated for the pain or injustice that we faced in this world. This belief can help us cope better with the trials that we face.

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Āl-'Imrān (3), Verse 18.
2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Hūd (11), Verse 101.
3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Nisā' (4), Verse 77; Sūrah al-Isrā (17) Verse 71.

JORDAN: "What is the proof that God is Just?"

ME: "Justice is the opposite of injustice. God does not have any motivation or reason to be unjust, therefore He must be just.

Why does God not have any reason to be unjust? Injustice is due to:

- Lacking something
- Ignorance, or
- Amusement/fun

all of these are not possible for Allah ﷻ who is All-Perfect."

JORDAN: "All that makes sense, but there is still a fundamental problem that I have with the idea that God is Just. There is so much evil and suffering that is present in this world: Innocent people are killed, children are starving, earthquakes destroy homes, and good people are oppressed. So either:

- God does not know about all of this injustice, or
- He knows about it but is not capable of doing something to alleviate or stop it, or
- He knows about it, is capable of doing something in regard to it, but does not care enough to do something, therefore He is not just.

But if you say that God is All-Knowing, All-Capable, and Just, then the presence of evil causes a logical barrier which brings even the existence of God into question."

ME: "First of all, your belief in the existence of God should not depend on looking at the presence of good or evil in the world. The arguments that we went through about the existence of God were independent of such things. The way to approach the presence of evil and suffering is to first prove the existence of God, understand that He is Perfect, and then you will come to understand why He does things in a certain way.

Secondly, our belief in the Justice of God and God's perfection tells us that:

a) God knows about good and evil because He is All-Knowing.

b) God is capable of doing something about the bad things that happen due to the fact that He is All-Powerful and All-Capable.

c) God introduces Himself as the All-Merciful and All-Beneficent, so we know that He loves us and does not want real harm to reach us.

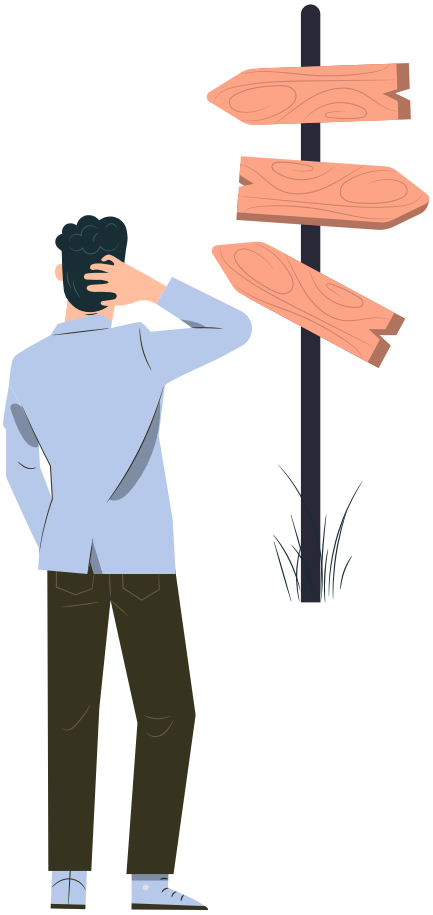
d) God allows supposedly harmful or evil things to take place (in the form of suffering or different evil events) for a reason, and the presence of suffering and evil are not in contradiction with God's Justice or God's Mercy and Love for us."

JORDAN: "You mean that a God who is Just permits suffering and evil to exist? How can that be the case?"

ME: "As a general statement, evil that exists is 'relative,' meaning that it is evil from a certain perspective compared to other factors. However, God would not create something that is pure evil."

JORDAN: "You said that God does not create pure evil, so then what about the Devil? Do Muslims believe in the Devil? Is he not pure evil?"

ME: "Muslims do believe in the presence of the Devil, and he is referred to as Iblīs or Shayṭān. However, the presence of Iblīs is not pure evil. For people who fall into the trap of Iblīs, he is a source of evil and suffering. But for those who resist his temptations, Iblīs is a source of goodness because that person will become closer to God and receive higher levels in Paradise. It is also important to remember that Iblīs was not created as pure evil; rather, he was created with free will. He chose the path of evil through his own free will."



Now that the belief of Muslims regarding Allah ﷻ not creating pure evil is clear, let us understand some of the wisdom behind why the Almighty One permits relative suffering and evil to take place in this world:

- A lot of what we call evil is a necessary consequence of free will and the nature of this world being a place of tests and trials. If Allah ﷻ created a world without tests and trials, or did not give human beings free will in this world, then they would not have an opportunity to reach perfection and earn an eternal life in permanent bliss.
- Human beings make their judgments based on incomplete knowledge and relative knowledge.
  - ▷ **INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE:** Human beings are limited in all things, so they do not often have the bigger picture view; whereas Allah ﷻ is All-Knowing about everything.
  - ▷ **RELATIVE KNOWLEDGE:** Human beings are bound by time and place; as opposed to Allah ﷻ whose knowledge is absolute and is not bound by a certain time or place.

The Noble Qurʾān refers to this where Allah ﷻ says:

> "And whatever you (humankind) have been given of knowledge is very little." [4]

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 85.

Some examples of this include natural disasters such as earthquakes. Those who are afflicted with such disasters suffer greatly. But on a macro level, these "disasters" are natural consequences of the complex way in which the Earth operates. They serve beneficial purposes, like allowing energy that builds up due to the movement of tectonic plates to be released.

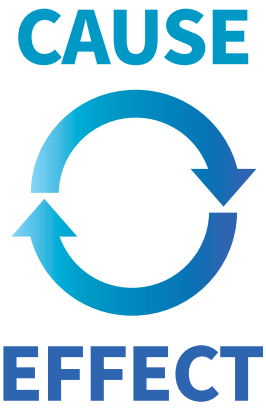
- Suffering in this world can be a blessing in disguise by helping to remove arrogance and distraction from the true purpose of the creation of human beings. An extended period of ease and comfort can often lead a person to love and attraction to this material world, and make one forget the real purpose of this world, which is meant to be the grounds of preparing for the Hereafter. Particularly in this modern world, where often one's material needs are instantly gratified, one can easily forget about the essential need for Allah ﷻ. Suffering can be a blessing in disguise in that it forces a person to reach out to the Almighty One and connect to one's innate nature *(fiṭrah)*. When a person feels an inner need for Him, then they will worship Him, which is the purpose for why human beings have been created.
- Difficult situations unlock potential. People react to difficult situations in two ways:
  - ▷ They complain, lose hope, or give up; or
  - ▷ They become more determined to persist and fight off the challenge, and in the process, they overcome their obstacles and become better people as a result. Many geniuses, such as Charles Dickens, unlocked their potential as a result of facing great difficulties in their lives.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about a time when you came out stronger on the other side of a difficulty or challenge in your life. How do you think this hardship was a blessing in disguise? Did it unlock any new potential for you?

- Difficult situations provide opportunities for special spiritual growth. An example of this can be seen in the life of Sayyid Hāshim al-Ḥaddād—a blacksmith who lived in the 20th century, and was known for his high level of purity and closeness to Allah ﷻ. Sayyid Hāshim lived with his wife and mother-in-law. His mother-in-law used to treat him very badly, shout at him, and call him names. One day, Sayyid Hāshim felt that he could longer bear his mother-in-law's insults. He went to his teacher, Āyatullāh Sayyid Qāḍī at-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and asked him for advice about what he should do. Sayyid Qāḍī advised him to be patient, and told him that soon Allah ﷻ will open up the doors of mercy for him. Sometime later, Sayyid Hāshim came home after a hard, tiring day of work. Like usual, his mother-in-law started to yell at him. He did not respond, but instead patiently bore her comments, then went to take a walk in order to calm down. Suddenly, he was given a wonderful spiritual gift, and was able to become aware of Allah's presence in an even greater way than ever before.
- Difficulties provide variety in life and make life interesting!
- Sometimes people create evil/difficulties for themselves by their own actions. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

> "Corruption has appeared in the land and the seas due to what the hands of human beings have earned…" [5]

- **CAUSE AND EFFECT:** We live in a system of cause and effect. The choices that a person makes can sometimes bring about difficulties upon themselves. But still, there is wisdom in that difficulty.



5 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verse 41.

Activity 4.1b: Cause and Effect

1. What are some everyday scenarios of choices that we make which can cause difficulties for us?

CAUSE	EFFECT
Example: Driving recklessly.	**Example:** Getting into a car accident.

2. What can we learn from these daily challenges that we face as a result of our own actions?

Activity 4.1c: Review Questions

1. Why is the Justice of Allah ﷻ so important that it is singled out as one of the pillars of faith *(Uṣūl ad-Dīn)*?

2. Someone comes to you asking for proof that Allah ﷻ is Just. How would you use examples of injustice to answer this question?

3. Look up verse 85 of Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17).

   a. Write out the translation.

   b. Based on that verse and the division of knowledge into absolute and relative, what kind of knowledge does a human being have?

Activity 4.1c: Review Questions (Continued)

4. Look up verses 6 and 7 of Sūrah al-ʿAlaq (96).

   a. Write out their translations.

   b. How can we use this verse to help understand the existence of evil and suffering?

5. How can a person who loses one's entire house in a flood or a fire understand that Allah ﷻ is Just with them? What could you say to them in this trying time to remind them about the Justice of Allah ﷻ?

4.2 Free Will and Predetermination

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the potential conflict between Divine Justice, Oneness in creation, and reward/punishment for the deeds that human beings commit.
- Summarize the different perspectives of the Ashʿarītes, Muʿtazalītes, and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ regarding free will and predetermination.
- Explain the meaning of *Amrun baynul Amrayn*—a command between the two commands.

JORDAN: "I now understand some of the reasons about how God is Just, yet evil and suffering still exist. However, there are still a couple of issues that trouble me when it comes to understanding the Justice of God. One of them is where responsibility for our actions lies, and how we can be punished or rewarded for what we do. Please explain the following reasoning:

- God creates everything.
- He creates the actions that we perform.
- So when we perform evil deeds, God is the Creator of them.
- Yet, God says that we are subject to punishment for the evil deeds that we commit.
- But punishing somebody for acts that someone else committed is an act of injustice.

Therefore, God is unjust."

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Explain to your partner how and why the above reasoning is flawed. Remember, as partners you should listen silently, then share afterwards without interrupting the other person.

Once both partners have shared their thoughts, take the next 5 minutes to write down important concepts that were brought up:

ME: "Even before the coming of our final Prophet ﷺ, people of previous faiths also struggled to correctly understand this difficult concept. During the time of the Prophet ﷺ and after him, it was an issue as well, but it became more significant during the Umayyad dynasty. The Umayyads needed a way to legitimize their rulership. They knew that people would not accept them as the representatives and leaders of Islam; thus, they used the doctrine of predestination to convince people that had God wanted it any other way, then He would not have permitted them to be in charge. But because they were in charge, God wanted it as such, and therefore people had to obey them. They used poetry—the most effective form of media at that time—to propagate this message.

The first form of this doctrine was known as *Jabr*, which means 'absolute compulsion and determinism.' According to this doctrine, God is completely in charge and human beings have no free will. People who followed this doctrine were known as the *Jabriyyah*.

The *Ashʿariyyah* (also known as the Ashʿarites) came after the *Jabriyyah* (those who believed that human beings do not have any free will) and were heavily influenced by them. They believed that God creates actions, but He lets human beings 'earn' the action, and somehow passes ownership of that action to the person. So for example, if someone wants to steal, God creates the action of stealing, then somehow transfers it over to the person. The person does an action that God created, then He assigns it over to that person.

Their reasoning behind this statement is that they want God to still be in charge, but for human beings to take responsibility for their actions.

However, this doctrine is problematic on many fronts, for example:

1. How does God create an action, but then somehow "transfers" it over to a human being?
2. It leads to determinism or predestination, meaning that God forces or compels human beings to do good or bad things—known as compulsion, and that one's fate is predetermined by God for everyone. Whatever happens is by the Will of Allah ﷻ, and a human being has no say in the matter and is just a puppet to act out whatever Allah ﷻ wants without any choice on their part. But this would mean that God is unjust.

In response to the Ashʿarites, another group was formed known as the Muʿtazilites. They believe that God does not have any role in the actions of human beings. He gave them complete and absolute free will to create their own actions; and thus they will be punished or rewarded for whatever they do.

There are two problems with their doctrine:

1. It challenges the Oneness of God in His Lordship. Allah ﷻ did not just create, then walk away from His creations; rather, He is in charge of everything, and every moment of existence depends on Him. To say that human beings are completely independent is to say that God does not play a role anymore, which goes against logic and the Qurʾān.
2. According to their doctrine, there would be multiple, independent creators, meaning that all human beings would be creators, and Allah ﷻ would also be a Creator. But we have already proven that God is the One and only Creator."

Activity 4.2a: Jigsaw!

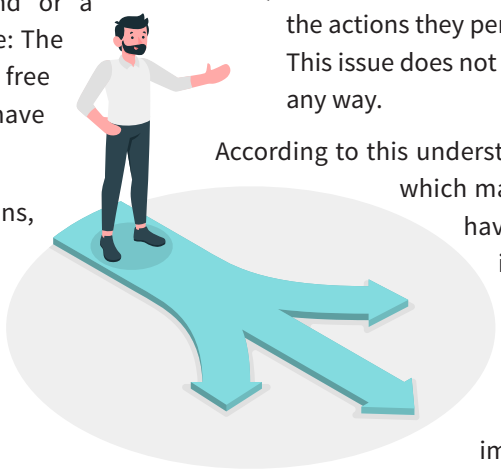
Each student will receive one of the above groups (Jabriyyah, Ashʿarites, Muʿtazilites) to re-read about and reflect on as below:

- **5 MINUTES:** Read about your group, and write down 1 or 2 points about why their thinking is flawed based on what we have learned about Allah ﷻ.
- **3 MINUTES:** Find all the other students in your class who have been assigned the same group—this is now your expert group! Once you are in your group, each student will have one role: Discussion leader (who guides the group), recorder (one who takes notes), researcher (will go through everyone's notes and summarize them), and presenter (who will present to the class on behalf of the group).
- **15 MINUTES:** With your expert group, re-read the section about your specific group, and discuss ideas, thoughts, and questions. As a group, come up with 3 key points that the presenter can share with the class in order to teach them why this particular thinking is flawed.

What is the correct perspective? Intuitively, we know that we have some type of free will. We have the ability to choose—to a certain extent—what we want to do. Someone who talks and walks when they are sleeping is not doing so out of their own choice, whereas one who talks or walks when they are awake does so out of their own choice. A person whose hand shakes due to a medical condition, such as Parkinson's disease, is different from an actor who deliberately makes one's hand shake. When one of our limbs "falls asleep" due to poor circulation, we lose the ability that we had before to move it of our own "free will."

But how much free will do we have? Do we, as human beings, have complete free will to do whatever we want, whenever we want, as we please? The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have taught us that the correct approach to understanding this issue is called *Amrun baynul Amrayn,*[1] which means 'a middle ground' or 'a path between the two paths.' The two paths are: The path of predetermination, and the path of total free will. The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ tell us that actually we have partial free will. How is our free will partial?

1. We are more or less free to choose our actions, but what we can do is limited. For example, we can stand on one foot and still remain standing, but we cannot remain standing if both of our feet are off the ground. We can turn our heads, but to a certain extent—not as much as an owl. We can run fast, but not as fast as a cheetah.



2. Allah ﷻ has granted human beings the ability to act for themselves, but this power is dependent on the Power of Allah ﷻ. Humanity therefore, must take responsibility for their own deeds. When they perform any actions, they are still bound by the Will of Allah ﷻ which operates at a higher level in the chain of causes and effects.

Therefore, in summary,

a) Allah ﷻ has Power over everything and His Power is not limited in any way.

b) He is the One and only Creator.

c) Human beings have free will—to a certain extent—to make their own choices; and this free will is given to them by Allah ﷻ.

d) Allah ﷻ will reward or punish human beings based on the actions they perform as a result of their own will. This issue does not contradict the Justice of Allah ﷻ in any way.

According to this understanding, verses *(āyāt)* in the Qurʾān which may seem to indicate that we do not have free will need to be understood in the context of Allah ﷻ being the sole Creator and the All-Powerful. He ordained for us to have free will, but we are not independent of Him when it comes to implementing this free will.

JORDAN: "Does this mean that God allows someone to commit a sin and in fact is the ultimate Creator of that sinful act?"

ME: "God does not desire for people to commit sins. He sent Prophets ﷺ and Divine Books to guide humankind and show them the Right Path. He also creates people with an innate nature *(fiṭrah)* to direct them to know and worship Allah ﷻ. But He also wants people to be tested, and earn His special mercy through making the right choices. If God were to stop people from sinning, then there would be no point in the creation of human beings. Allah ﷻ already had other creatures who do not commit any sins, i.e., the angels. Human beings were created differently because Allah ﷻ wanted them to be able to make decisions on their own, which means that they have the ability to be good and righteous, or be disobedient and sin."

1 Ṭabarsī, Abū Manṣūr, *Al-Iḥtijāj*, Vol. 2, P. 414.

This point is beautifully illustrated in the following *ḥadīth*:

Regarding the verse of the Qurʾān: *"And had your Lord willed, all those who are on Earth would have believed…"* [2] Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said that Allah ﷻ revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that: *"...Had I compelled them to believe, they would not have deserved any reward from Me, nor any praise. Rather, I wanted them to have faith in Me out of their own choice, without being compelled to do so, so that they can deserve proximity to Me, nobility, and they can remain forever in the Paradise of Eternity."* [3]

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 99.
3 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, Vol. 2, P. 480.

STOP AND REFLECT: Explain in one sentence why Allah ﷻ chose not to compel everyone on Earth to be a believer, but rather gave them the choice.

Activity 4.2b: Review Questions

1. Other than for political reasons, why would someone say that human beings do not have free will?

2. Give an example (other than what is in this lesson) which shows intuitively that you have free will.

3. Look up verse 29 of Sūrah al-Kahf (18).

   a. Write the translation below.

   b. Does the first part of this verse indicate that human beings have free will, or that their actions are predetermined? Why or why not?

4. Look up verse 47 of Sūrah Yāsīn (36).

   a. Write the translation below.

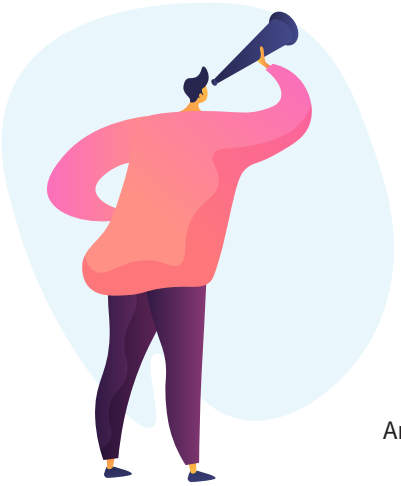
   b. How do you think this verse is related to the concepts presented in this lesson?

4.3 Knowledge of God and Predetermination

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the potential challenge that absolute Divine Knowledge presents to the free will of human beings, and Divine Justice in punishing and rewarding according to that will.
- Explain how that challenge can be resolved by showing how free will can still exist despite absolute Divine Knowledge.



Activity 4.3a: Anticipation Guide

Before reading this lesson, complete the Anticipation Guide below to the best of your abilities.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	EXPLANATION
Allah ﷻ knows everything.			
Allah's foreknowledge of the choices that we will make compels us to make them.			
Our purpose in this world is to attain perfection by making good choices, and in turn we will then be able to secure a lofty position in Heaven.			
Allah ﷻ simply punishing us on what He already knows we will do is unjust.			

JORDAN: "Another problem I am facing when trying to accept the Justice of God has to do with His absolute Knowledge of everything. This is what my reasoning looks like:

a) God knows everything.

b) He knows what I am going to do in the future.

c) Whenever someone knows for sure what is going to happen in the future, then that event is 'rigged' or planned out from beforehand.

d) This means that everything we do has already been preordained for us.

e) This means that God is not just, because He is punishing or rewarding us for actions that we did not choose to take."

ME: "Okay, so let us discuss these different issues that you have mentioned. Points **a)** and **b)** are true. Allah ﷻ has Knowledge of everything, because He is Perfect and has all the highest Attributes. However, His Knowledge is different from our knowledge. For us, in order to be sure about something, either:

- that thing has to be 'rigged.' or
- that thing already happened in the past.

Otherwise, when we talk about the future, we have to use the words "predict" or "guess" or "anticipate," not "know" or "for sure this will happen."

Sometimes, we can predict things with a high level of accuracy. For example, a good teacher can predict how a student will perform during the year with quite correct precision. Similarly, there are some weather patterns which allow weather forecasters to predict a 100% chance of precipitation. However, there is always a possibility that something unexpected can happen and things will happen contrary to expectations, or that the weather patterns may change.

Allah ﷻ, however, is the Creator of everything, and whatever happens or is going to happen is completely clear to Him. Human beings are faced with certain barriers of knowing things, and in most situations they do not have a lot of depth in regard to things. For Allah ﷻ though, all of His creations are present to Him without any obstacles whatsoever. He knows all about every cause and effect that has led and will lead to all events taking place.

Allah ﷻ is fully aware of the choices we are going to make, but that does not mean that He compels us to make those decisions. We are still free to make our own choices, and Allah ﷻ will reward or punish us on the basis of those choices.

Imagine that a friend has an exam tomorrow, and they tell you that they chose not to study for it. When they do not perform well on that exam, your foreknowledge of their choice not to study plays no role in compelling them to do poorly on that exam. The foreknowledge of Allah ﷻ about the choices we will make does not in any way compel us to make them."

An example of a rigged event is when two sport teams appear to compete with each other, but actually the plan has already been made for one of them to win and the other one to lose. Although, even when it is rigged, we cannot say that we are absolutely sure things will take place exactly according to plan. We can only be fairly sure that they will.

STOP AND REFLECT: Think about some of the choices you make in your daily life. How do you come to make those decisions? Are you compelled to make those choices because of the knowledge you have that you were given with the help of Allah ﷻ, or because Allah ﷻ directly compels you to do those things?

JORDAN: "So, if God knows what choices we are going to make, then why does He not just fast forward to the Hereafter, and reward or punish us on the basis of what He already knows?"

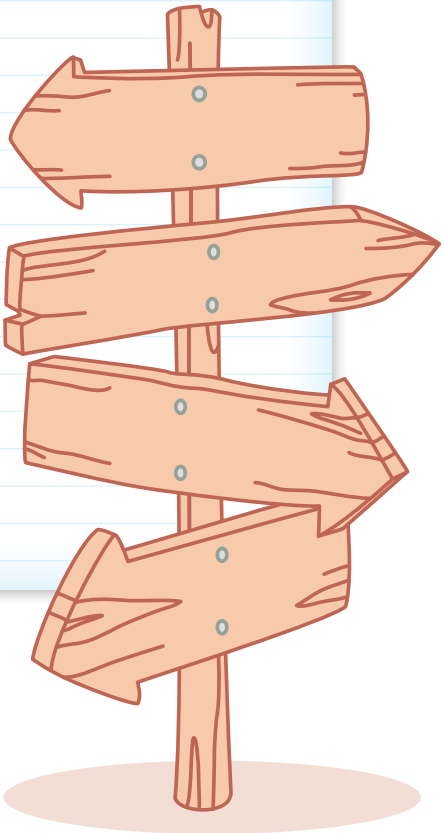
ME: "God knows the choices we are going to make. If we do not actually make those choices, then it does not make sense to say that God knows about them."

JORDAN: "Okay, then why does God not reward or punish us on the basis of the choices that He knows we will make, if we were actually presented with those choices?"

ME: "God does things on the basis of justice. It would not be fair for us to be rewarded or punished without actually having performed those things. We would be able to complain on the Day of Judgment that God is judging us based on things we did not actually do. We could say to Him: 'Where is the proof or evidence that I did such and such a thing?' As well, the purpose of creating human beings and placing them in this world would be futile."

JORDAN: "Why doesn't God just place everyone in Heaven, and forego all of these trials and tests and possible punishments?"

ME: "God does things based on wisdom and fairness. Human beings were created with a purpose, which is to attain a level of perfection beyond what other creations of God can possibly attain. This perfection can only be reached by being challenged and tested, successfully navigating these different trials, and earning our position in Heaven by being righteous human beings, and through making good choices. As we will learn in a later unit when we explore the topic of the Hereafter, the Heaven that God promises us is a result of the good choices and deeds we perform in this world. Without having performed these deeds, there would be no Heaven for us to enter!"



Activity 4.3b: Review Questions

1. Revisit your answers to the Anticipation Guide above. Complete it again below. Have any of your answers/explanations changed? If so, write your new explanations in the table below.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	EXPLANATION
Allah ﷻ knows everything.			
Allah's foreknowledge of the choices we will make compels us to make them.			
Our purpose in this world is to attain perfection by making good choices, and in turn we will then be able to secure a lofty position in Heaven.			
Allah ﷻ simply punishing us on what He already knows we will do is unjust.			

Activity 4.3b: Review Questions (Continued)

2. A magician put on a show where he was able to guess a lot of personal information about the people in the audience who were supposedly picked randomly. If you were to watch this show, would you suspect that the show was staged/rigged? Why?

3. Human beings have limited knowledge. Can they know for sure about anything that will happen in the future?

4. Explain how Allah ﷻ knows about the choices we are going to make without compelling us to make those choices.

4.4 Eternal Punishment

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the difference between justice *(ʿadl)* and Divine grace *(faḍl)*.
- Explain why eternal punishment can pose an ideological challenge to Divine Justice.
- Give several reasons for how eternal punishment can be reconciled with Divine Justice.

Activity 4.4a: KWL Chart

Prior to reading this lesson, complete the chart below based on what you know, and what you want to know about punishments in the Hereafter. After the lesson, come back and fill out the 'What I Learned' section below.

What I Know	What I Want to Know (Questions)	What I Learned

JORDAN: "Another question I have about Divine Justice is when it comes to punishments in the Hereafter. Muslims believe (on the basis of verses in the Qurʾān) that some people will be punished in the fire of Hell for eternity. The question is that how can someone who sins for a limited period of time in this world be punished for eternity? How can a finite period of mistakes or sins be recompensed with an infinite period of punishment?"

ME: "This issue actually applies to both Heaven and Hell. There are people who worship God and stay away from His prohibitions throughout their entire lives. Let us say that for 70 years they obeyed God. It would be fair (and an example of *ʿadl*, or justice) then for God to reward them for 70 years. Yet God says in the Qurʾān that He will reward the believers for all of eternity! This is an example of His *faḍl*. *Faḍl* means Divine grace or favor, meaning that sometimes God does not just respond with what is fair *(ʿadl)*, but He goes beyond justice and gives so much more."

The subject of someone staying in Heaven forever does not come up as a problem with Divine Justice.

But it is also true that some sinners who sin for a finite amount of time will be given an infinite punishment. How can we understand this in light of Divine Justice?

1 What is fair is for the punishment of an action to be given based on the consequences of that action, not how long was spent doing that action.

For example: If someone who is driving a truck falls asleep at the wheel for a split moment, the action itself takes a second—but the consequences of that could last for a lifetime. Perhaps, they get into an accident and have life-long complications, maybe they end up killing someone, or they total the truck and become paralyzed as a result, etc.

Another example: The effect of the atomic bombs that the United States dropped in Japan back in the 1940's are still being felt by the people who live in the affected areas today.

2 Every action has an inner form and an outer form. For example, *ṣalāh* has an "outer" form which consists of *rukūʿ, sujūd, takbīr, qiyām,* etc. However, the "inner" form of *ṣalāh* can be a spiritual ascension *(Miʿrāj),* or protection from the fire of Hell.

THINK, PAIR, WRITE

There are many *aḥādīth* and examples of times when Allah ﷻ multiplies rewards for the smallest of good deeds that we do on a daily basis. What are some of these actions or instances? Are they examples of Allah's *faḍl*? Complete a quick write based on your thoughts and discussions.

Activity 4.4b: Determining Inner and Outer Forms

Read the examples below, and determine what the inner and outer forms of the actions might be. Where possible, identify the verse of the Qurʾān that explains the inner action.

EXAMPLE: Taking money from orphans.

a. **Outer form:** Having money to spend on oneself.
b. **Inner form:** As if a person is consuming fire in one's belly.
c. **Āyah:** *"Indeed, those who unjustly consume the wealth of orphans are only consuming (nothing) but fire into their bellies. And they will be burned in a blazing fire (Hell)!"* [1]

1. **ACTION: Backbiting about someone.**
   a. **Outer form:** _____
   b. **Inner form:** _____
   c. **Āyah:** _____

2. **ACTION: Taking the life of someone unjustly.**
   a. **Outer form:** _____
   b. **Inner form:** _____
   c. **Āyah:** _____

3. **ACTION: Demonstrating extreme pride/arrogance.**
   a. **Outer form:** _____
   b. **Inner form:** _____
   c. **Āyah:** _____

4. **ACTION: Showing disobedience to one's parents.**
   a. **Outer form:** _____
   b. **Inner form:** _____
   c. **Āyah:** _____

5. What is one more action that you can find which has an outer and inner form? What is the *ḥadīth* or *āyah* that supports it?

   ACTION: _____
   a. **Outer form:** _____
   b. **Inner form:** _____
   c. **Ḥadīth/āyah:** _____

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ(4), Verse 10.

When Allah ﷻ punishes or rewards someone, He does so on the basis of the inner form of that action (although the outer form is also observed). The inner form of some sins can be so terrible that they will last for an eternity.

3 When someone is in Hell forever, the problem is not with Allah ﷻ being unjust. Rather, the problem lies with the person themselves—they cannot go to Heaven because they do not have the ability and capacity to go there.

For example: take into consideration a beach ball vs. a solid steel ball that is totally filled with steel. You can fill up the beach ball with water or air because it has an opening, and has the capacity to take in water or air. However, the steel ball is incapable of being filled with anything because it has no opening.

Another example: can be that of a horse being taken into an eloquent food banquet. The horse will not be happy there surrounded by food that it does not eat—it needs its stable or field to be happy!

Similarly, those who are going to be sent to Hell forever, themselves destroyed their ability in this world to understand what is true and good. Therefore, no matter what, they will never have the capacity to benefit from Heaven.

These are individuals whom Allah ﷻ knows will never change. Even if they were given a chance to come back to life and reform their ways after seeing their fate in the Hereafter, the Qurʾān says that they would still go back to their old ways: *"But were they to be sent back they would revert to what they were forbidden."* [2] Also, they are individuals who are completely aware that the end result of their arrogant rejection of truth will be eternity in Hell, yet they made their choices willingly.

4 Some of the people who enter the fire of Hell will not stay there forever. Many of them will be cleansed of their sins, then they will deserve to go to Heaven and receive the special blessings of Allah ﷻ there. There will be a small group of those who stubbornly denied the truth—not out of ignorance, but knowingly—who were leaders for others in misguidance and they will remain in the fire of Hell forever.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 28.

Activity 4.4c: Review Questions

1. Why is eternal punishment a subject that is discussed with respect to Divine Justice, not eternal reward?

2. Why is eternal reward an example of the *faḍl* (Divine grace and reward) of Allah ﷻ, not just His Justice?

3. If you were to compare the *ṣalāh* of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) and Muʿāwiyah, would the major difference between the two be in the "outer" form or the "inner" form? Why?

4. How can an evil or bad action that is limited in its time (in this world) be the cause of being in Hell eternally (forever)?

4.5 Differences in Creation

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand how differences in creation might lead to questions about Allah's Justice.
- Give reasons as to why such differences do not contradict the Justice of Allah ﷻ.
- Apply the reasons given to real-life scenarios where people might otherwise doubt the Justice of Allah ﷻ.

We know that Allah ﷻ is *al-Ḥakīm*, meaning that **all** of His actions are based on wisdom. However, looking at the world around us, we see many things that may initially seem to be unfair and contrary to Allah's wisdom. Previously, we learned about some of the reasons for how we can explain such things.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some reasons for the presence of evil in this world?

We have learned that sometimes, we prematurely judge an event that takes place as 'unfair' because of our imperfect knowledge, and not seeing or knowing the hidden benefits behind it.

One of the questions brought as a challenge to Allah's Justice has to do with the presence of differences in the creations of Allah ﷻ. Every created thing is not given the same qualities as others. For example, some plants and animals have multiple colors, whereas others are a single color. Animals can move around and communicate with one another, whereas plants are stationary. Through the use of the intellect and their advanced thinking, human beings are superior to all the other creations; and among human beings, there are differences as well.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some ways in which human beings are different from one another? Give a few examples.

Without thinking over the matter carefully, we could easily assume that such differences are unfair. Many times people may look at others and say: "It's not fair that so-and-so is like that, but I am like this." However, in reality, these differences are compatible with the Justice of Allah ﷻ due to the following six reasons:

1. THERE IS A HUGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.

We already learned that justice means giving everyone what they truly deserve, not giving everyone the same thing. In certain matters, Allah ﷻ gives according to the level of a person's efforts. In general, students who put more effort into learning and applying what they learn will end up being placed in better universities and securing better job opportunities. Generally, those who have healthy sleeping habits, regularly exercise, maintain a balanced, healthy diet will be more physically fit and suffer less diseases than those who do not. In such cases, it is fair and just for those who try harder to get more, because they deserve it.

STOP AND REFLECT: The above paragraph mentioned two general rules. Can you think of any exceptions to these rules?

2. ALLAH ﷻ CREATES SOME DIFFERENCES BASED ON THE VARYING RESPONSIBILITIES THAT CREATIONS NEED TO FULFILL.

Part of the job of a plant is to produce oxygen, and it needs leaves to do this. An animal however, does not possess any leaves because the job of an animal is different to that of plants. Human beings have the responsibility to lead a life of servitude, and in order to do this, they need the ability to reason, thus they have been granted intellect (called *ʿaql* in Arabic), and this goes far beyond the ability of any other creations.

When it comes to family and society, people need to complement each other in order to be able to help one another achieve the purpose for which they have been created. If all members of a society had exactly the same skill set, would they be complementary to others?

STOP AND REFLECT: Imagine a community consisting of only one, or very limited type of skills, like a hospital with only doctors and no other professionals, or a village with only bakers and nothing else. Would such a community be able to survive?

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"…It is We who have dispensed among them their livelihood in this present life, and have raised some of them above others (in degrees and rank), so that some may take others into service (make use of one another in service)…"* [1]

This verse describes how Allah ﷻ intentionally places people in different places in society, not so that they can be exploited, but rather so that society can run harmoniously, and people can benefit from one another.

3. SOME DIFFERENCES ARE A MEANS OF BEING TESTED.

Allah ﷻ created human beings so that they can be tested. One of the ways He tests people is to give to some and to not give to others. Such a test can reveal the level of our patience, self-control, and faith in the decision of Allah ﷻ. For example, one of the great *marāji*, Marḥūm Āyatullāh Muḥammad Riḍā Gulpaygānī, said that he went to visit one of his old friends who was on his deathbed. When Āyatullāh Gulpaygānī arrived, his friend opened his eyes and said: "See how unfair Allah is! We were both students together and we used to study under the same teacher, ʿAbdul Karīm al-Hāʾirī. We were both educated. But you reached this level and became a *marjaʿ*, while I did not arrive at any position!" After saying that, he passed away.

STOP AND REFLECT: What was the test that this dying man faced? Did he pass it or fail it? What does that reveal about the purpose behind the difference?

It is essential to remember that our position, even one of status, does not dictate whether we are safe from *Shayṭān* or not. As mentioned above, it is how Allah ﷻ chooses to test us and how we face this test that is of utmost importance.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zukhruf (43), Verse 32.

4. A BLESSING FOR ONE PERSON CAN BE A CURSE FOR ANOTHER.

A knife is an essential tool for a chef, but is dangerous in the hands of a child. Similarly, the steering of an airplane has to be done by a qualified pilot, while giving it to someone else would be completely disastrous. Sometimes, out of Allah's mercy, He withholds a blessing from someone because He knows that this blessing will cause a particular individual to stray away from the path of servitude.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is one natural trait or talent that you have been given that most other people do not have? What is something that others have that you do not have? How might your test be different if your blessings were different?

5. SOME DIFFERENCES ARE IMAGINED AND IMPOSED BY HUMAN BEINGS, NOT ALLAH ﷻ.

Real differences are different from imagined differences. For example, Allah ﷻ created us with different skin colors. This is a real difference. However, the color of one's skin is not meant to be an advantage or a disadvantage for anyone. In some societies though, people imagine that white skin is better than black skin and impose a system that supports this idea. A government can have discriminatory policies that favor some races and prevent others from achieving certain things.

Similarly, some people believe that the rich are more important than the poor, or that males are more important than females, but these are false beliefs imagined by certain individuals, not at all the teachings taught by the Prophets ﷺ or their successors.

6. ALLAH ﷻ IS FAIR, AND WILL JUDGE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS GIVEN THEM, AND HOW MUCH EFFORT THEY PUT IN.

According to a *ḥadīth* reported from Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, there will be three books/records presented on the Day of Judgment to everyone. One is a book of blessings; the other is a book of good deeds; and the third is a book of evil deeds. That means that the extent of one's blessings in this world will be factored into one's accounting on that Day. More will be expected from those who had more blessings.[2]

2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 602.

Activity 4.5a: Identifying Examples

Complete the table below with your own example for each of the six reasons given above about differences.

LIST OF REASONS	YOUR OWN EXAMPLE FOR THIS REASON
There is a difference between justice and equality.	
Allah ﷻ creates some differences because of the different responsibilities that beings need to fulfill.	
Some differences are a means of being tested.	
A blessing for one can be a curse for another.	
Some differences are imagined and imposed by human beings, not by Allah ﷻ.	
Allah ﷻ is fair, and will judge people according to what He gave them and how much effort they put in.	

Activity 4.5b: Review Questions

1. How can the content of this lesson help a believer who feels upset that some of the people around them are more athletic or have better looks?

2. Can you use reason #2 to explain why—within an Islamic household—Allah ﷻ places different responsibilities upon the father and the mother?

3. Provide an example (other than those given) on how a blessing for one person can be a curse for another.

4. For reason #1, what if an individual puts in a lot of effort into something but does not achieve what they are looking for? How can this be explained given that Allah ﷻ is Just?

FIQH
(ISLAMIC LAWS)

CHAPTER 1

Taqlīd and Taklīf

1.1 Taqlīd

1.2 Philosophy of Aḥkām

1.1 Taqlīd

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review key terminology related to *Taqlīd*.
- Identify a scholar's role in helping to understand the rulings of a *marjaʿ*, and the availability of websites where one can ask questions and receive answers.
- Review the criteria for being a *marjaʿ*, including the nine requirements, and how an individual should choose a *marjaʿ*.
- Compare and contrast the terms **obligatory precaution** and **recommended precaution**, and detail the conditions set out in both.
- Familiarize students with prominent *marājiʿ* with relevant biographical information about them.

Complete the following activities individually or in groups (as assigned) by referring to the sections outlined in each activity. The content sections come after the activities.

Activity 1.1a: Vocabulary Review

Form a group of 2-3 students. Refer to **section 1** of this lesson below to revise the meanings of the following terms, then present them to the class:

1. *Mujtahid*

2. *Marjaʿ*

3. *Taqlīd*

4. *Wājib*

5. *Mustaḥab*

6. *Mubāḥ*

7. *Makrūh*

8. *Ḥarām*

In your discussion, answer the following questions:

9. What is the difference between a *mujtahid* and a *marjaʿ*?

10. What is the difference between *makrūh* and *ḥarām*?

PRAYER OF SIGNS: ṢALĀTUL ĀYĀT

Activity 1.1b: Analyze the Rulings

This activity is aimed at revising terminology related to Islamic rulings.

Go to: **https://www.sistani.org/english/book/48/2273/**

This is the chapter titled "Prayer of Signs (*Ṣalātul Āyāt)*" and is part of the book of *Islamic Laws* according to the rulings of Āyatullāh Sīstānī.

Read Ruling no. 1470, and answer the following questions:

1. In this ruling, what does **'obligatory precaution'** mean?

2. What does **'recommended precaution'** mean?

3. Based on this ruling, complete the table below.

   Place the following events in the correct column below (in relation to Āyatullāh Sīstānī's rulings regarding *Ṣalātul Āyāt*):

   Solar eclipse | Lunar eclipse | Earthquake | Thunder and lightning that would scare most people

OBLIGATORY *(wājib)*	AN OBLIGATORY PRECAUTION *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*	A RECOMMENDED PRECAUTION *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)*

Then answer the following questions:

4. For which natural event(s) is a follower of this ruling allowed to refer to the ruling of the next most learned *marjaʿ*?

5. For which natural event(s) is it recommended for a follower of this ruling to offer *Ṣalātul Āyāt*, but it is not required?

Activity 1.1c: Utilize the Sources

As you saw in the previous activity, sometimes we need help to understand the rulings of a *marjaʿ*. This may be because the terms used in the book of rulings are technical, or because a ruling has many different scenarios or parts. To help us understand the rulings correctly, and to avoid misunderstanding them, we can refer to qualified scholars who are able to explain the rulings to us more clearly. Some of these scholars have set up websites where we can ask questions and receive answers.

The following are some resources that we can refer to:

- **http://www.moulanaonline.com/**
- **http://www.askthesheikh.com/**
- **www.islamquest.net**

Use the above resources to answer the following questions:

1. **Question:** Can I eat *ḥalāl* meat if it is prepared in a fast food restaurant in a non-Muslim country?

   Go to **moulanaonline.com,** then go to the Questions Library, search "meat" and find the relevant ruling. Discuss the answer you found with your teacher and the class.

2. **Question:** Can I keep a cat at home? Is my prayer valid if there is cat hair on my clothing when I pray?

   Go to **askthesheikh.com**, then click on the link to "Islamic Laws" in the left-hand menu. Click on the question regarding cat hair. Discuss the answer you found with your teacher and the class.

Activity 1.1d: Criteria for being a Marjaʿ

Refer to **section 2** of this lesson (Criteria for being a *Marjaʿ*). List the minimum criteria required for a person to be *marjaʿ*.

Activity 1.1e: Biography of a Marjaʿ

Refer to **section 3** of this lesson. Read the profile of one or both of the *marājiʿ* introduced in this section. Answer the following questions:

1. Where were they born?

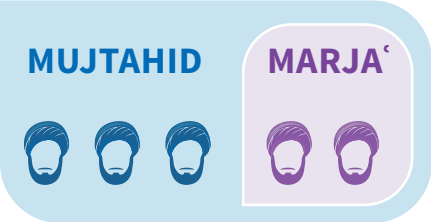
2. Where do they currently reside?

3. At which age did they begin their Islamic studies?

4. What have been some of their social and political influences in the country where they reside?

5. List two points you have learned about the value of pious scholars from the *ḥadīth* quoted in section 3.

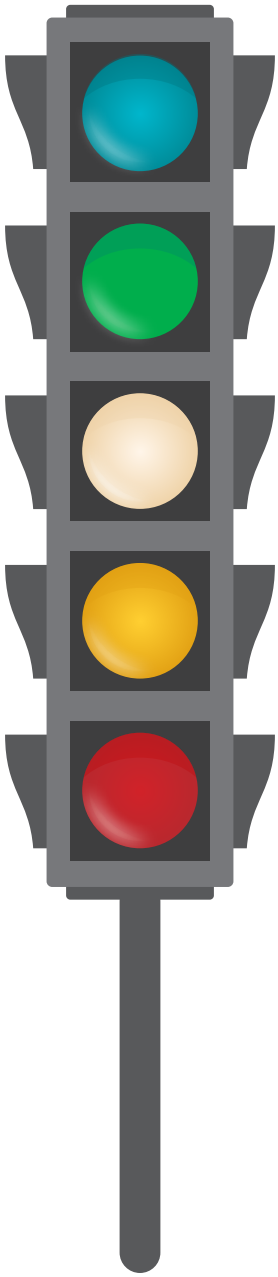
SECTION 1: TERMINOLOGY REVISION



MUJTAHID: A scholar who has reached a high level of expertise in the Islamic Sciences to the extent that they can infer and deduce Islamic rulings from the available resources and evidence.

MARJAʿ (PLURAL MARĀJIʿ): A scholar who has reached a high level of expertise in the Islamic Sciences to the extent that they can infer and deduce Islamic rulings (do *ijtihād*) from the available resources and evidence. A *marjaʿ* is a scholar who has this ability of *ijtihād* in all fields of Jurisprudence. Other people can refer to this scholar to learn the Islamic rulings and act according to their verdicts.

TAQLĪD (EMULATION): Referring to, or following a *marjaʿ* to learn the rules of Islam relating to the Branches of Religion *(Furūʿ ad-Dīn),* and acting according to their rulings.



WĀJIB (OBLIGATORY): Something that we MUST do. We will be rewarded for performing these actions; but if we do not do them, then there will be a punishment for us. Things are *wājib* for us to do because there is a benefit in these actions for us (either physically, spiritually, or both). For example: prayers, fasting, and *Ḥajj*.

MUSTAḤAB (RECOMMENDED): Something that is recommended to do. We do not have to perform *mustaḥab* acts, but there will be many extra rewards and benefits for us if we do them; however, we will not be punished for not doing them. They also help to bring us closer to Allah ﷻ and improve our spirituality. For example, saying *salām* to someone, or reciting *adhān* before we start our *ṣalāh*.

MUBĀḤ (PERMISSIBLE): Something that we are allowed to do, and it has neither a reward nor a punishment. For example, drinking a cup of water in normal situations, or walking.

MAKRŪH (DISLIKED): Something that is better not to do because usually these actions are harmful for our body or soul. If we stay away from them, then we will be rewarded; but if we perform them, there is no punishment. For example, eating too much, or drinking water while standing at night.

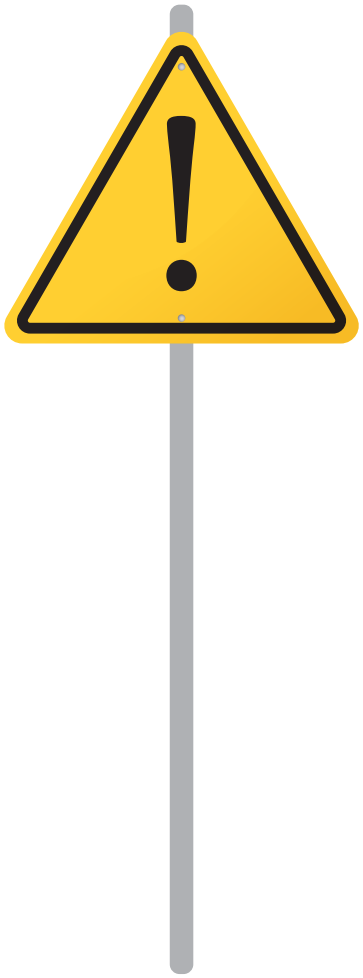
ḤARĀM (FORBIDDEN): Something that is forbidden to do. Allah ﷻ has made these things impermissible so that we can stay protected from any type of physical or spiritual harm. One will be punished for committing *ḥarām* actions, and rewarded for staying away from them. For example, eating pork, or drinking alcohol.

Now let us discuss some other terms that you may come across:

IḤTIYĀṬ WĀJIB (OBLIGATORY PRECAUTION): This is when a *marjaʿ* does not have a definite ruling on a particular issue. But according to the principles of Jurisprudence that are based on definite sources, due to the evidence that is available, they give a ruling of precaution toward one side that is obligatory to follow. However, one has the option to follow their *marjaʿ* on that ruling, or refer to another *marjaʿ* who is the next most learned (this is called *rujūʿ*).

For example:

> *In Ruling 722 of Āyatullāh Sīstānī's Book of Laws, he says: If a person doubts (has shak) whether the sun has set or not and deems it probable that it is hidden behind the mountains, buildings, or trees, then they must not perform the Maghrib prayer before the redness of the sky in the east—which appears after sunset—has passed overhead. Even if one does not have such a doubt, they must, based on obligatory precaution, wait until the aforementioned time.*



In the above ruling, Āyatullāh Sīstānī explains the rule regarding the time for *Maghrib* prayer. He rules that it is an obligatory precaution that even if there are no mountains, buildings, or trees covering the sunset horizon, a person must, based on obligatory precaution, wait until the redness in the sky of the easter horizon has passed overhead.

In this case, his follower can either follow the precaution that he has suggested, or follow another *marjaʿ* who is of equal knowledge or is the next most knowledgeable, if that second *marjaʿ* has a definite ruling.

IḤTIYĀṬ MUSTAḤAB (RECOMMENDED PRECAUTION): In this case, the *marjaʿ* does have a definite ruling based on certainty; however, he believes that there is some evidence which may indicate that precaution is better taken in a certain situation, so he gives a 'recommended precaution.' In this case, it is better to follow his initial ruling, but you can choose not to follow it if you want.

For example:

> *In Ruling 777 of Āyatullāh Sīstānī's Book of Laws, he says: When someone is making up a forgotten sajdah or tashahhud, one must cover up oneself in the same manner as when they perform their prayers; and the recommended precaution is that one should also cover up oneself in this manner when they perform sajdatā al-sahw.*

Here, Āyatullāh Sīstānī has a definite ruling, which is that if a person is performing the *qaḍā* of a missed *sajdah* or *tashahhud*, they must be covered in the same way they cover themselves during the rest of the prayer. However, for *sajdatā al-sahw*, they do not need to cover themselves in this same manner. However, it is recommended to do so.

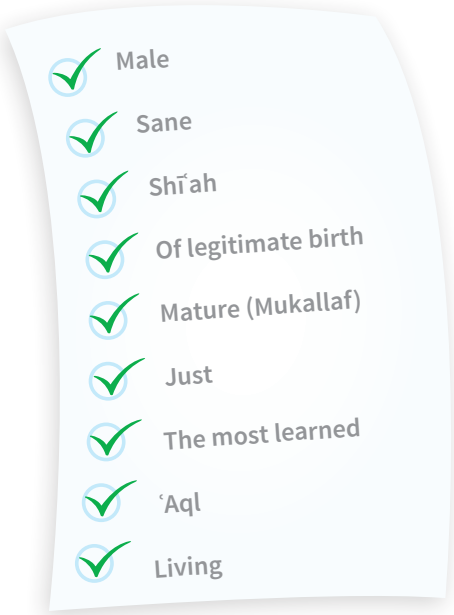
The followers of Āyatullāh Sīstānī have a choice whether to act according to the 'recommended precaution' or not.

SECTION 2: CHOOSING A MARJAʿ

How do we Choose a *Marjaʿ*?

There are three main ways for us to know which *marjaʿ* to follow:

1. A person (for example, a learned scholar of Islam, such as a *mujtahid*) may have the qualifications of identifying a *marjaʿ* themselves.
2. For other people, they can make enquiries and ask from two just and learned people who are qualified to identify who is at the level of a *marjaʿ*. An example of such a person may be a senior scholar/shaykh in one's community. If two such people confirm that someone is a *marjaʿ*, then one can follow this person as their *marjaʿ*.
3. If a number of people who are learned and qualified to identify a *marjaʿ* state that a particular person is worthy of being a *marjaʿ*, then one can follow this person as their *marjaʿ*.



Conditions of being a *Marjaʿ*

In order to become a *marjaʿ*, a person must meet nine requirements; and these are as follows:

1. Male.
2. Sane *(ʿĀqil).*
3. *Shīʿah Ithnā ʿAsharī* (a Shīʿah who believes in all of the 12 Imāms, as opposed to certain sects of Shīʿah who only believe in some of the Imāms).
4. Born of legitimate birth.
5. Mature *(Mukallaf).*
6. Just* *(ʿĀdil).*
7. The most learned on issues where *marājiʿ* have different opinions.
8. Possesses Intellect *(ʿAql)*: meaning that he is not suffering from any kind of memory loss, such as Alzheimer or Dementia.
9. Living (for those who choose a *marjaʿ* for the first time).

**A person is said to be just when they perform all of those acts which are obligatory upon them, and refrains from all those things which are forbidden for them to do. The sign of being just is that one is apparently of a good character, such that if enquiries are made about them from the people of their locality, or from their neighbors, or from those whom they live with, then they would confirm the good conduct of that person.[1] Further to this, given the sensitivity and significance of the position of being a marjaʿ, in addition to being 'just,' one must have full control over one's desires and restrain oneself from worldly aspirations if they are to be followed on the level of being a marjaʿ—based on obligatory precaution.[2]*

1 Āyatullāh Sīstānī, *Islamic Laws*. Ruling No. 2. https://www.sistani.org/english/book/48/2117/
2 Āyatullāh Khamenei, *Practical Laws of Islam.*

SECTION 3: INTRODUCING SOME OF THE MARĀJIʿ

The Value of a Scholar

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

"Whenever a scholar passes away, a gap appears in Islam which cannot be repaired (with anything) until the Day of Resurrection." [3]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ also said:

"On the Day of Judgment, Allah will gather all the people in one place and the scales will be set up. The blood of the martyrs will be weighed against the pen of the scholars, and the pen of the scholars will outweigh the blood of the martyrs." [4]

Activity 1.1f: The Power of the Pen

This narration by Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ makes a strong assertion. In your own words, what do you think is the deeper message behind his statement?

إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ اَلْقِيَامَةِ جَمَعَ اَللّٰهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ اَلنَّاسَ فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ وَ وُضِعَتِ اَلْمَوَازِينُ فَتُوزَنُ دِمَاءُ اَلشُّهَدَاءِ مَعَ مِدَادِ اَلْعُلَمَاءِ فَيَرْجَحُ مِدَادُ اَلْعُلَمَاءِ عَلَى دِمَاءِ اَلشُّهَدَاءِ

"On the Day of Judgment, Allah will gather all the people in one place and the scales will be set up. The blood of the martyrs will be weighed against the pen of the scholars, and the pen of the scholars will outweigh the blood of the martyrs." [6]

The Message:

True Scholars are the Heirs of the Prophets ﷺ

Some narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ tell us that the closest people to the Prophets ﷺ are those who are most knowledgeable about their messages. They also tell us that the scholars are the heirs and trustees of the Prophets ﷺ. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

> "...the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets...the Prophets do not pass on Dīnārs and Dirhams (i.e. wealth) as inheritance, but they pass on knowledge as inheritance." [7]

In the next section of our lesson, we will take a brief look at the lives of two of our most prominent *marājiʿ*.

3 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 9, P. 51.
4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, Vol. 4, P. 398.
6 *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, Vol. 4, P. 398.
7 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 2, P. 151.

Āyatullāh Sayyid ʻAli Khamenei, 20 March 2017
Photo: Khamenei.ir, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

WEBSITE: www.leader.ir/en

CLICK ON: *'Practical Laws of Islam'* for his Book of Rulings *(Risālah)*.

BORN: Mashhad, Iran, 1939.

Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī Khamenei

His Humble Childhood in His Own Words

"We had a difficult life. I remember that sometimes at night we did not have anything in the house for dinner.... The house only had one room and a gloomy basement. Whenever a guest came to see my father—his idea was that a religious scholar's home is a place where people come to seek help—we had to go to the basement until they left."

His Academic Success

He began his Islamic studies from a very young age, and by the age of 18, he was doing *'Baḥth al-Khārij'*—the highest level of Islamic studies. He left his hometown of Mashhad to go to Qum in order to further his Islamic studies.

His Care for His Parents

When his parents became elderly and were ill, he did something that is difficult for any great scholar to do. He left the academic arena—in which he was so comfortable and was excelling in—to care for his parents back at home. Recalling this, he says: "If I have been successful in life, I believe that it all stems from this good deed that I did for my father; indeed, for both my father and mother."

His Political Activities

He was one of the students of Āyatullāh Khomeini, and was involved in a lot of political activities against the corrupt regime of the Shah of Iran in the 1950-1970s. Every now and then, he would be arrested and tortured, then released again. Despite this, he continued to be active, and sometimes had to live underground, and he gave lectures and lessons in secret. Finally, the revolution in Iran succeeded and he was one of the few selected by Āyatullāh Khomeini to lead the Islamic Republic of Iran. After Āyatullāh Khomeini passed away, he was elected by the 'Assembly of the Experts' (which is a body that is elected by people, similar to how people might elect other representative officials in other countries), as the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Sayyid ʿAlī Khamenei still has this role, and is acknowledged by some people as the political leader of Muslims around the world.

His Status as a *Marjaʿ*

The fact that Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī Khamenei is a *mujtahid* and a *marjaʿ* is commonly accepted, and was officially announced by the testimony of over 50 *mujtahidīn.*

Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī Sīstānī

His Childhood and Early Academic Career

Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī Sīstānī grew up in Mashhad, and began his Islamic Studies at the age of five. At the age of 18, he moved to Qum to study, then two years later, he moved to Najaf. His main teacher in Najaf was Āyatullāh Khoei.

A Unique Teacher and Student

- As a student, he stood out because of his attention to detail, intelligence, hard work, and diligent research.
- At 30 years of age, he received certification from his teachers that he had reached the level of being a *mujtahid,* and soon began teaching various topics in the *Ḥawzah* (Islamic Seminary) of Najaf.
- He was a unique and outstanding teacher with a special style. His students state that he always respected others' opinions, was polite and well-mannered in discussions and in general life, and was extremely pious.

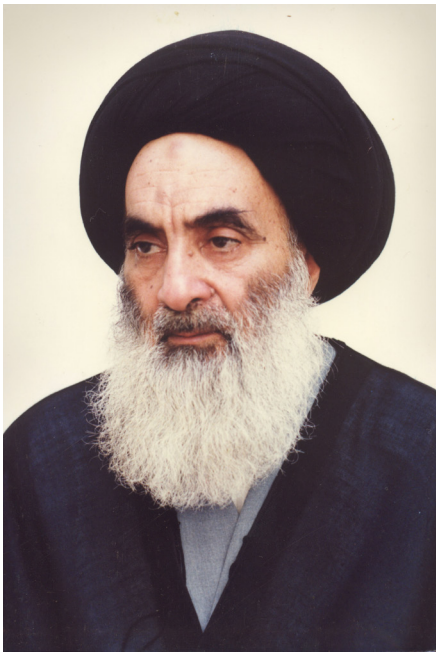
His Status as a *Marjaʿ*

He was the special student of Āyatullāh Khoei—who himself was a great *marjaʿ*—and when Āyatullāh Khoei passed away, Sayyid Sīstānī was acknowledged as the most learned *marjaʿ* after him.

His Social Influence

Once he became a *marjaʿ* and people began to follow him in great numbers, the oppressive Iraqi regime closed his masjid, arrested him, then tortured him. This happened later on in his life as well. However, no matter what the hardships, he believed that the most important thing was maintaining the *Ḥawzah* in Najaf, so he continued his teaching and other work there.

Āyatullāh Sīstānī is currently still residing in Iraq and plays a great role in influencing the Iraqi people, and his followers all over the world. In 2014, when the terrorist group Dāʿish took control of large parts of Iraq, Āyatullāh Sīstānī issued a religious verdict that the youth of Iraq should mobilize themselves in an organized and lawful way in order to fight back against these terrorist groups. The people of Iraq responded to this verdict immediately and organized themselves into volunteer forces that fought back against the Dāʿish and drove them out of Iraq, restoring peace to the country and allowing people to go back to their homes and livelihoods.



Āyatullāh Sayyid Ali Sistān, 1 October 2016
Photo: https://commons.wikishia.net

WEBSITE: www.sistani.org

CLICK ON: Islamic Laws at the top menu to find his Book of Rules *(Risālah)*.

BORN: Mashhad, Iran, 1930.

1.2 Philosophy of Aḥkām

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the role of Islamic Law in guiding human beings toward achieving the purpose of their creation.
- Get familiar with some *aḥādīth* of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ regarding the importance of learning about Islamic Law.
- Review terminology regarding the evidence and philosophy behind Islamic Law.

PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAMIC LAW

Activity 1.2a: Quick Write

Why should I learn about Islamic laws and what are they good for? How committed do I need to be to learn them, and then practice them?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR US TO LEARN THE LAWS OF ISLAM?

Whenever we are in a situation where we do not know where we need to go, or how to get to a destination—even if we know what that destination is—common sense dictates that we need a guide.

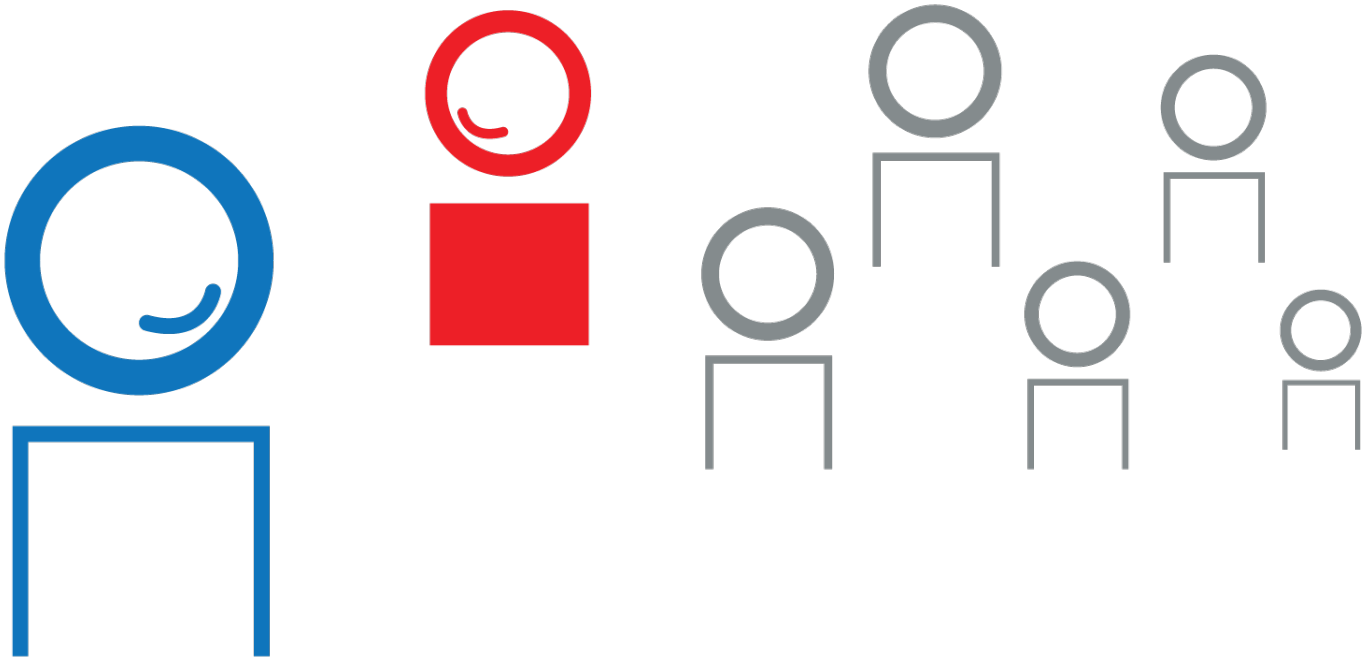
This is what Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ referred to when he said:

> "One who does not have a wise person to guide them will perish." [1]

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, P. 159.

Activity 1.2b: Who Guides You?

Using the graphic organizer below, can you identify some individuals who act as guides in your life right now?



Life is like a snowy land where in all directions there is snow and it is not clear where we came from, where we need to go, and how to get there. Without proper guidance, people will choose different destinations in life. Some people are after wealth, others are after fame, others are obsessed with beauty, the material world, satisfying their low desires, and other various sorts of goals.

All of these goals and other worldly goals—if they are pursued for oneself and not for Allah ﷻ—will lead a person to some kind of destruction. Common sense dictates that we all need to be guided as to what is the main goal of our lives, and how can we get there?

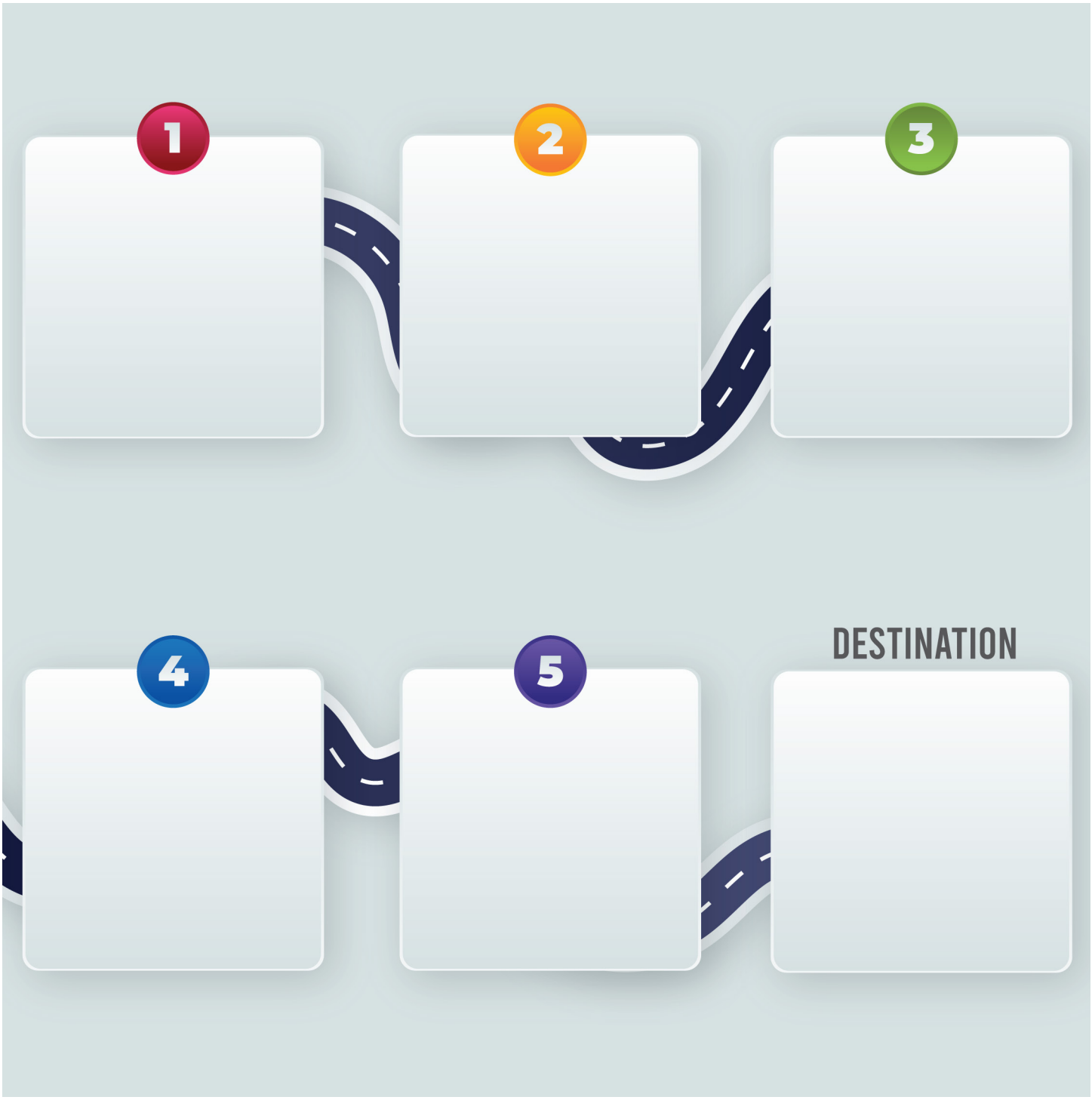
The teachings from our Creator that tell us where we came from, what our goal is, and how to get there, and these can be summarized in what is called **Islam (submission)**—which is a complete way of life.

Once we understand what our destination is—to return to Allah ﷻ—we need to learn how to get there in the best possible manner. The way to get to our destination is through following the *Sharīʿah* (the Laws of Islam). Following these is following a path toward Allah ﷻ.

Activity 1.2c: Pathway to Allah ﷻ

While the laws of Islam are plenty, what are some of the key guidelines within the Islamic *Sharīʿah* that Allah ﷻ has prescribed as essential steps toward attaining closeness to Him?

Record some steps in the sequence chart below.



Every law that Allah ﷻ has stipulated in Islam is there for a reason, and is a means to help us toward getting to our goal. There is no law in Islam which has been prescribed "just because." Once a companion asked Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ: *"Some people say that the ḥarām (prohibited) and ḥalāl (permissible) have no purpose behind them."* The Imām ﷺ responded:

> "That is very far from the truth! The servants of Allah are in need of staying away from ḥarām because those things that are ḥarām invite a person toward corruption and annihilation." [2]

QUESTION:
Why are there so many laws in Islam?

ANSWER:
There are a few reasons for this:

1. Learning how to ride a bicycle is fairly simple. There are not too many rules you have to follow, and even young children can learn how to ride a bike. On the other hand, learning how to fly an airplane is quite complicated. You have to go to a special school and there are a lot of rules you have to learn and then follow very carefully. However, those rules have a purpose. Let us say you wanted to travel a long distance: say from Toronto to Timbuktu. Going there on a bicycle would be very difficult, if not impossible, but by airplane, it would be a day's journey.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Can you come up with three positive things that you would like to achieve in your personal life (immediately or in the future), but you know you would not be successful at it if you are not given proper guidance or instructions to follow? (i.e. Getting a driver's license without a driver's manual or an instructor.)

Any time we wish to achieve a high goal, the more rules the better. In our case, we want to reach the highest of goals, which is perfection. Each rule that Allah ﷻ gives us is an opportunity to reach this perfection.

2 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol. 16, P. 165.

2. Each law, when practiced with the proper mindset and attention, is an opportunity for us to remember Allah ﷻ. For example, there are rules and guidelines in Islam for how to enter a room, how to sit down and stand up, how to greet one another, the best way to eat food, what to do when one wants to travel, etc. Whenever we follow these rules, it is an opportunity to spend our time in the remembrance and obedience of Allah ﷻ.

3. It is true that there are many laws in Islam, but as reported in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ tells us that what has been prohibited for us is much less than what is allowed for us.[3] Take the grape tree for example. From this tree, we get grapes, vinegar, grape juice, wine, raisins, grape seeds, grape seed oil, wood from it, grape leaves, ash from the wood of it, syrup/extract, etc. From all of these things, only wine is *ḥarām,* while the rest of them are all *ḥalāl*.

4. Compared to some of the previous religions, Islam is actually easier to follow. For example, previous people had to fast for longer periods of time, and their daily obligatory prayers were more than ours.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why do you think Islam is an easier religion to follow than others?

QUESTION:

What is the reason behind Islamic Laws? For example, why is pork *ḥarām?* Why is *ṣalāh wājib?* Why do we have to respect our parents?

ANSWER:

When it comes to looking at the reason behind Islamic Laws (meaning the answer to the question 'why?') there are two reasons:

1. *ʿIllah* (علة) or *Dalīl* (دليل) which means the 'proof or evidence' behind an Islamic ruling. Islamic Law is derived from three sources: the Qurʾān, the *Sunnah* (traditions) of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and the *ʿAql* (intellect). The proof tells us about the evidence for certain laws in the Qurʾān, the *Sunnah*, or the intellect.

For example: *Ḥajj* is obligatory *(wājib)* upon a person once in a lifetime, as soon as one is *bāligh,* able to go, and certain other requirements are met.

A person may then ask: Why is it *wājib*? In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says: "And it is the duty of humankind toward Allah to make pilgrimage to the House for those who can afford the journey to it." [4]

Based on this verse and other evidence, we know that *Ḥajj* is obligatory because it a duty of the servants toward the Almighty, as has been stated in the Qurʾān. If we look to the *aḥādīth,* we will find many other reasons why Allah ﷻ has made *Ḥajj* obligatory upon His servants.

3 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 1, P. 169, Sermon 114.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 97.

2. *Ḥikmah* (حكمة) or *Falsafah* (فلسفة) which means the philosophy behind a law, in other words, how does this law help humanity or prevent harm from reaching them?

For example: Why do we have to pray? In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says: *"Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs, and the remembrance of Allah is surely greater."* [5]

From this verse, we understand three points of wisdom behind *ṣalāh* (why we have to pray on a daily basis):

1. Praying prevents indecencies
2. Praying prevents sins
3. The prayers can help us remember Allah ﷻ

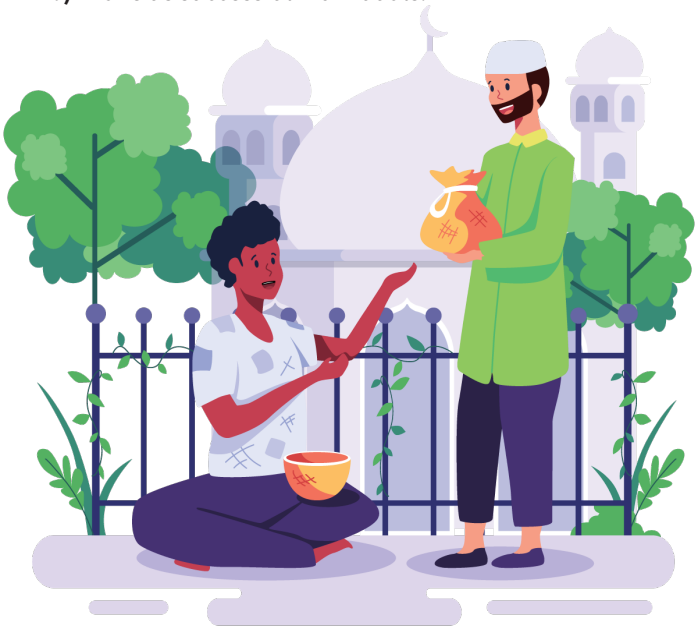
In the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ gives us the wisdom behind the obligation of giving charity. He says:

> "And spend (in the way of Allah); that is better for yourselves. Those who are saved from their own greed (protected from stinginess of the soul)—it is they who are the successful (prosperous ones)." [6]

From this verse, we understand that the wisdom or philosophy behind giving charity is that it will:

a) Save us from our own greed and miserliness,

b) Make us successful individuals.



5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 45.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Taghābun (64), Verse 16.

The higher level scholars *(mujtahidīn)* examine the evidence behind Islamic Laws when performing *ijtihād* (extractions of laws). Scholars also seek out the wisdom *(ḥikmah)* behind laws in the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. For example, Shaykh Ṣadūq, one of the greatest Shīʿah scholars of all times, wrote a two-volume work called *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ* in which he compiled the wisdom behind many of our Islamic Laws.

Differences between the proof and wisdom behind a law

We must remind ourselves that Allah ﷻ created us and knows what is best for us, so even if we do not come to know the reason and philosophy behind a particular law, we should have certainty that it is still the best avenue for us to reach our goal of perfection and nearness to Allah ﷻ.

With that said, when it comes to some actions that may not have an immediate reasoning behind it, we often have *aḥādīth, āyāt,* or other sources which point us to the possible wisdoms of those laws.

Nonetheless, we may not get complete reasons behind everything, but must trust in the fact that Allah ﷻ knows best.

Therefore, the difference between proof and wisdom is:

1. We have to know the proof behind a law, but it is not necessary to know the wisdom behind a law. (It can be very helpful, but is not required). Imām ʿAlī ﷺ tells us that sometimes the wisdom behind something is hidden from us on purpose as it is a means of a test for us.
2. We can sometimes guess the wisdom behind a law, without saying for sure that is the reason for it, but we can never guess the proof behind a law—we need solid evidence for that.

   Again, whether we know the wisdom of a law or not, we should keep in mind that laws originate from Allah ﷻ, who has perfect Knowledge of what we need and what is best for us. He is All-Loving and All-Compassionate, and would never want anything but the best for us.

Activity 1.2d: The Proof or Wisdom of Some Laws

The following is a list of some common Islamic Laws. For each law, determine if the law has proof or wisdom behind it (or both) by placing a checkmark under the identifying column. Then, briefly explain your reasoning and/or identify the possible wisdoms behind that law or guidance.

ISLAMIC LAW	PROOF	WISDOM
Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"O you who believe! Indeed, intoxicants and games of chance … are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; therefore shun it so that you may be successful. The devil only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep (avert) you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer; so will you not then desist?"* [7]		
Reasoning and/or Possible Wisdom(s)		
Many of our leading scholars say that smoking is not permissible because of its damaging harm on one's health.		
Reasoning and/or Possible Wisdom(s)		

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verses 90-91.

ISLAMIC LAW	PROOF	WISDOM
Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ said: *"Eat any fish that has scales, but do not eat those that do not have scales."*		

Reasoning and/or Possible Wisdom(s)

ISLAMIC LAW	PROOF	WISDOM
Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous."* [8]		

Reasoning and/or Possible Wisdom(s)

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 183.

ISLAMIC LAW	PROOF	WISDOM
Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"But whoever repents after one's iniquity and reforms (oneself), then surely Allah will turn to them in forgiveness (mercifully); indeed, Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful."* [9]		

Reasoning and/or Possible Wisdom(s)

ISLAMIC LAW	PROOF	WISDOM
The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Almighty Allah sent me as a mercy to the worlds and to guide people. He ordered me to eradicate the playing of the flute, other instruments of music, all games of vice, idol (worshiping), and all practices of the Days of Ignorance."* [10]		

Reasoning and/or Possible Wisdom(s)

9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 39.
10 *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Ch. 79.

QUESTION:

Sometimes, Muslims who are not used to an Islamic lifestyle take a partial approach toward Islamic Law. They follow part of it, but reject other parts of it. For example, they may follow the laws that their family follows, but not those that their family does not abide by. Or they may abide by the laws that they find easy to follow, but leave aside those that they find difficult to do. Or, they perform their obligatory actions *(wājibāt)*, but do not stay away from those things which are forbidden *(ḥarām)*. Why is it important for a person to follow the laws completely, not just partially?

ANSWER:

We can look at this from different perspectives:

1. Islam means submission which means that we, as slaves of Allah ﷻ, look to Him for instructions, then obey them. One who picks and chooses is not submitting to Allah ﷻ—they are setting up another master alongside Him which is a form of polytheism *(shirk)*. That other master is usually the idol of the self. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"Have you seen the one who has taken as their god their own desire?"* [11]
2. Allah ﷻ wants us to worship Him the way that He instructs us to, not the way **we** want to worship Him. Once, Shayṭān told Allah ﷻ: *"Excuse me from prostrating to Ādam! Instead, I will worship You in a way that no one of the exalted angels or messengers have ever worshiped You!"* Allah, the Exalted, replied: *"I have no need of your worship. I wish to be worshiped only the way that I want, not the way that you want."* [12]
3. When trying to reach a goal where the path to it is unfamiliar, we need to follow the instructions carefully, or else we might perish along the way. For example, there are lava fields in various parts of the world that have hiking trails. Going off the trail is very dangerous because you could easily be burnt with erupting steam, or badly injured by inhaling toxic gas.

11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Furqān (25), Verse 43; Sūrah al-Jāthiyah (45), Verse 23.
12 Qummi, ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, Vol. 1, P. 42.

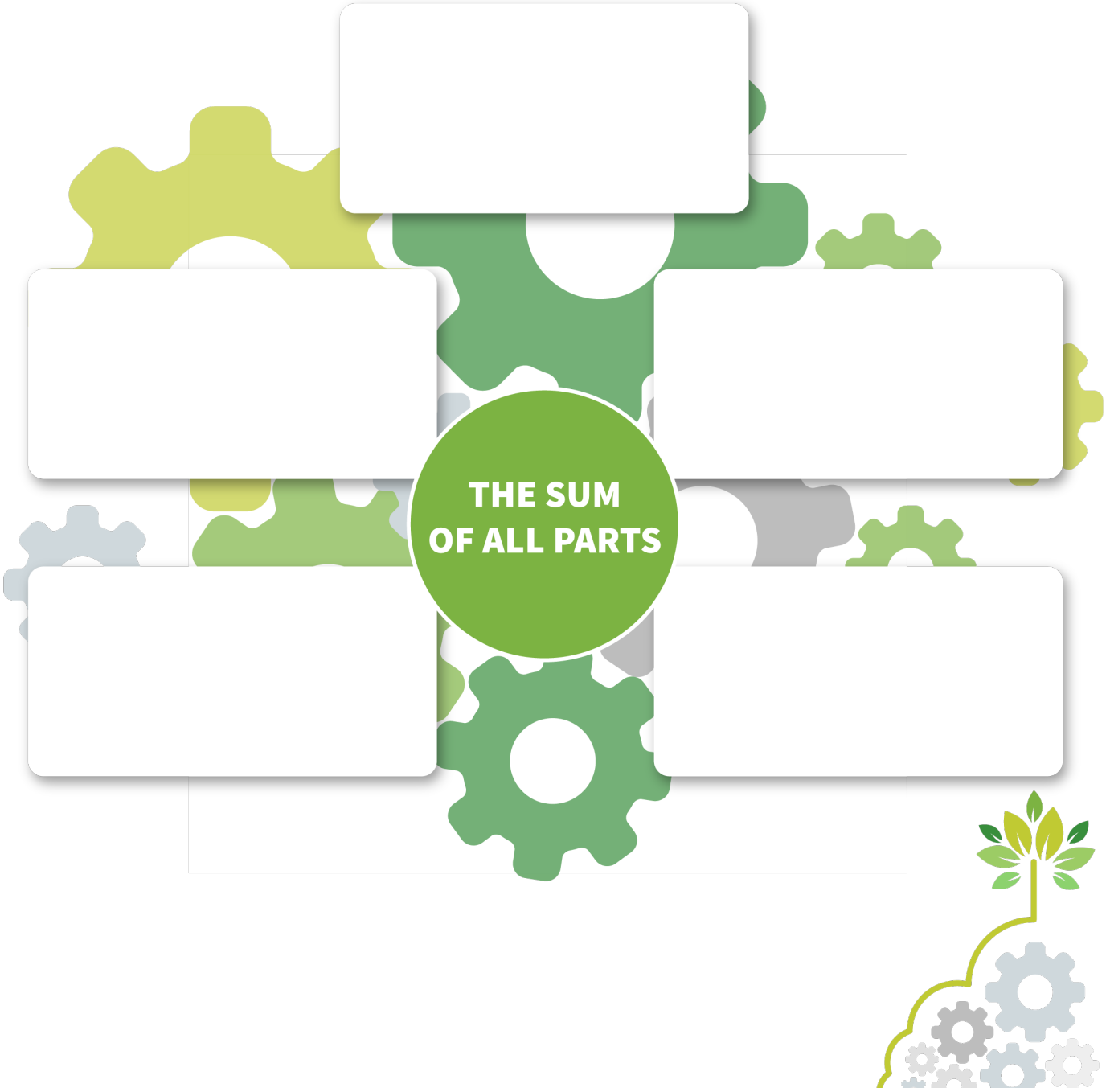
Activity 1.2e: The Sum of All Parts

In order for progress, growth, or development to take place, pieces or components that will eventually make the "whole" must be present.

Using the diagram below, can you deconstruct some processes or "whole" objects into their essential parts or components? For example, folding, faulting, volcanic activity, igneous intrusion, and metamorphism are all parts of the orogenic process of mountain building. Likewise, there are five stages to child development: newborn, infant, toddler, preschool, and school-age stages.

In any of the processes that you came up with, is it possible to remove or skip a stage? Why or why not? What might be the result?

STEM Design Graphic Organizer



Activity 1.2f: Extension Video

Listen to the sermon on the below link by Shaykh Mohammed al-Hilli and take note of the response that Shaykh Hilli provides to the youth who asked the question: "Does Islamic Law make sense?"

Islamic Law and Intellect: Does It Make Sense? - 9th Muharram 1443/2021

Link: **https://www.al-islam.org/media/islamic-law-intellect-does-it-make-sense-9th-muharram-14432021**

ISLAMIC LAW & INTELLECT: DOES IT MAKE SENSE?

Activity 1.2g: Review Questions

1. Based on what we discussed in class, what is the connection between following Allah's Laws and taking care of one's self (soul)?

2. Look up Verse 23 of Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17). What rule does this verse refer to? Does it state the wisdom *(ḥikmah)* for this rule or the evidence for the rule? Why?

3. In a *ḥadīth*, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ is reported to have said: *"Begin [your meal] with salt and end it with salt, for in doing so, there is a cure from 27 diseases."* Does this narration indicate a rule? Does it state the wisdom for this rule or the evidence for it? Why?

4. Explain this statement: *"Allah wishes that we worship Him the way that He instructs us to worship Him, not the way we want to worship Him."*

5. What can we learn from the grape tree about the argument that there are too many rules to follow in Islamic Law?

CHAPTER 2

Purity and Spirituality

2.1 Ṭahārah and Najāsah

2.2 Wuḍūʾ, Ghusl, and Tayammum

2.1 Ṭahārah and Najāsah

OBJECTIVES:

WE WILL:

- Review the key terminology related to purity *(ṭahārah)* and impurity *(najāsah)*.
- Define *ʿayn an-najāsah* which are things that are inherently *najis,* and can make other things *najis,* as well as discuss the common *najis* items.
- Explore the specific restrictions around disbelievers who are not *Ahlul Kitāb* (People of the Book, most commonly the Jews and Christians).
- Discuss the ways in which *najāsah* is transferred and how to establish if a thing has become *najis*.
- Identify the most basic principles of *ṭahārah* and *najāsah*.
- Review common methods for making impure *(najis)* things pure *(ṭāhir)*, including the use of *kurr* water or Earth.
- Identify the process of 'subjection' as a method for making more than one (related) *najis* thing *ṭāhir* at the same time.
- Explore the transition from impure *(najis)* to pure *(ṭāhir)* when a person becomes a Muslim.
- Discuss special circumstances for removing *ʿayn an-najāsah,* and the correct approach to emptying the bladder and bowel, and then purifying the private parts afterwards.

TERMINOLOGY REVIEW

Najis:
Najis things are impure according to the rules of Islam.

Ṭāhir:
Ṭāhir things are those which are pure according to the rules of Islam.

Muṭahhir:
Muṭahhir is something that can make an impure *(najis)* thing pure *(ṭāhir)* again.

Muṭanajjis:
When something is pure *(ṭāhir)* in and of itself, but becomes impure *(najis)* because of coming into contact with an impure *(najis)* thing.

NAJIS ENTITIES (ʿAYN AN-NAJĀSAH)

Something that is not *ṭāhir* is considered *najis*, or impure. There are certain things that are inherently *najis* and can make other things *najis* as well. These things are called *ʿayn an-najāsah*, which means always *najis* or inherently impure. Something that is usually *ṭāhir*, like your body or a shirt, can become *najis* through contact with one of the *ʿayn an-najāsah*.

ʿAYN AN-NAJĀSAH CHART

NAJIS ITEM	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
Urine and stool	The urine and stool of human beings, and any animals whose blood gushes forth is *najis*. Animals (like cows and sheep) whose meat is *ḥalāl* to eat are an exception. Also, according to a number of *marājiʿ*, the droppings of birds are not *najis*, regardless of whether their flesh is *ḥalāl* to eat or not.	Urine and stool of dogs, pigs, and human beings is *najis*.
Blood	The blood of human beings and some animals is *najis*. The blood of animals whose blood does not gush forth when it is slaughtered is *ṭāhir*.	The blood of a chicken is *najis*.
Dead body	The dead body of a person (who has not yet been given the *ghusl)*, or an animal (which has not been slaughtered Islamically) is *najis*. The parts of the body of such an animal including its skin/hide are also *najis*. The only exception is the corpse of an animal whose blood does not gush forth when it is slaughtered (e.g. fish). Animals which are *ḥalāl* to eat and have been slaughtered Islamically are not *najis*. Note: If we touch the body of a dead person after it has gone cold and before it has been given the necessary *ghusl*, then we must perform a specific *ghusl*, even if it is not wet.	If we are **certain** that leather comes from an animal which was not slaughtered Islamically, then this leather is *najis*.
Dogs and Pigs	Dogs and pigs living on land are *najis*. Their hair, nails, teeth, bones, and sweat are also *najis*. If a person touches a dog or a pig, and they or the animal are wet, then the body part which touched that animal becomes *najis* and needs to be made *ṭāhir*.	Any products including food items produced from these animals are *najis*. We need to be careful about this when eating or buying food.

NAJIS ITEM	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
***Kāfir* (Disbeliever; does not include *Ahlul Kitāb* like Christians or Jews)**	In Islamic law, a *kāfir* (or more precisely, *kāfir fiqhī*) is a person who has not recited the first two lines of the *shahādah*[1] and hence has not become a Muslim. This is different from a *kāfir* whom the Qurʾān speaks about, which is someone who knows the truth about Islam, but decides to reject it or rejects God, and is ungrateful to Him because of their inner malice. The meaning of *kāfir* in Islamic Law is more general, but in the Qurʾān, its meaning is much more specific. Most *marājiʿ*, like Āyatullāh Khamenei and Āyatullāh Sīstānī, state that the *Ahlul Kitāb*—who are Jews and Christians—are *ṭāhir*. Nonetheless, regardless of the kind of *kāfir* a person is, it is important that we still respect and show kindness to them, as they are still creations of Allah ﷻ. As Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: *"There are two kinds of people in this world: they are either your brothers and sisters in Islam, or your peers in humanity."*[2] Even if the person is not a Muslim, never think that you are better than them; they might revert one day, or due to their circumstances, they might be forgiven by Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment.	If a person shakes hands with an atheist and either one of their hands is wet, the hand of the Muslim has now become *najis* (per *iḥtiyāṭ wājib* according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī).
Wine and Beer	Wine and other alcoholic drinks that intoxicate a person are *najis*. If they come into contact with food, that food becomes *najis* as well.	Islamic law about intoxicants is so strict that if wine is served on a table, then it is *ḥarām* to even sit at that table, even if one does not touch the wine. Alcohol that is found in perfumes, sanitizers, and disinfectants is not *najis,* thus does not need to be avoided. Also, ethyl alcohol that is sometimes used in food substances and medicines is not *najis*. It can be consumed only if it is present in a trace amount, such as a tiny amount of vanilla extract that is used when making baked goods or ice cream.

1 *Lā ilāha illallāh, Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh.*
2 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter #53.

Activity 2.1a: Revision Activity

1. What is the difference between 'impure-*najis*' and 'dirty'?

IMPURE (NAJIS)	DIRTY

2. What is the difference between 'pure-*ṭāhir*' and 'clean'?

PURE (ṬĀHIR)	CLEAN

3. List six things that are inherently *najis*.

1.	**2.**
3.	**4.**
5.	**6.**

DISBELIEVERS WHO ARE NOT AHLUL KITĀB

This is one of the categories of *najāsah* that requires further explanation. In the science of Islamic Law *(Fiqh)*, the term *"kāfir"* (disbeliever) or *"kuffār"* (disbelievers) refers to a specific group of people—which are different than the majority of the *kuffār* that Allah ﷻ speaks about in the Qurʾān.

A *Fiqhī Kāfir* (disbeliever according to Islamic Law) is someone who has any of the following characteristics:

- Does not believe in the existence of Allah ﷻ, Prophethood, or the Day of Judgment
- Denies the Oneness of Allah ﷻ and ascribes partners to Him
- Denies the necessity of religion
- Curses the Imāms ؑ

According to most *marājiʿ*, these people are *najis*, and according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, they are *najis* per *iḥtiyāṭ wājib* (obligatory precaution).

Ahlul Kitāb (Jews and Christians) are an exception to this rule. Also, if you do not know the faith or religion of a person, then they are considered *ṭāhir*.

If someone falls into the category of a *Fiqhī Kāfir*, then the rules of *najāsah* apply, meaning that if you touch the person or something they touched and the wetness is transferred to you through wetness, then in order to make the area that was touched *ṭāhir* again, one must remove any *najāsah* and then wash it once.

It is important to note here that *najāsah* does not mean disrespect. Thus, we must follow our Prophet's example and have the highest level of manners and respect when dealing with people of other faiths.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can you maintain respect for an individual while also taking care to prevent or contain *najāsah* when interacting with a *Fiqhī Kāfir*?

HOW IS NAJĀSAH TRANSFERRED?

When something that is *najis* comes into contact with something that is *ṭāhir*, the *ṭāhir* thing also becomes *najis* and must be cleaned. However, it has to be noted that *najāsah* will only be transferred if either of the two things are wet or moist in such a way that the wetness is transferred. If both things are dry, then the *najāsah* will not spread. For example, if a person touches a dog that is dry with a dry hand, then their hand will remain *ṭāhir* and will not become *najis*.

WAYS OF ESTABLISHING NAJĀSAH

Sometimes, people can become very worried about *najāsah*, which makes the rulings more difficult than they were meant to be. To avoid this, Islam has set clear rulings for establishing whether something is *najis* or not.

There are some important ways of proving whether a thing is *najis* or not. These are very basic and simple ways which are practical and flexible in any environment that we may find ourselves in. This is where we can see the true ease which Allah ﷻ intends for us.

Before we proceed, it is very important to always remember the following principle that we have been taught from the teachings of our Prophet ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ, and that is:

> "Everything is pure (*ṭāhir*) until you know [with certainty] that it has become impure (*najis*)." [3]

It is very important to learn and apply this rule in our daily lives. A person does not get closer to Allah ﷻ by treating things that are not *najis* as *najis*. In fact, doing so can lead to constant doubt and worry about our body or clothes becoming *najis*, and eventually can prevent us from worshiping Allah ﷻ with contentment. It can even lead to serious psychological or spiritual diseases.

There are three ways of establishing that a thing is or has become *najis*:

1. When you are sure that something is or has become *najis*. If a person merely suspects or doubts that something may be *najis*, then it is not necessary to avoid it. For example, if you visit the mall and sit on a bench that is wet, or step on something wet, if you do not know for sure that the wetness is due to something *najis*, it is not necessary to purify your clothes, your body, or your shoes.
2. When a person who is in possession of an object says that it is *najis*. For example, if a Muslim cook says that a particular utensil or any other object which they handle is *najis*, then it will be accepted as *najis*.
3. When one or more just or reliable person(s) state that something is *najis* and/or state the reason for it being *najis*.

To summarize, if you are sure that something is *najis*, then you should consider it to be *najis* until you are certain that it has become *ṭāhir*. Consider this example: You are certain that your shirt had some particles of a *najis* liquid sprayed on it yesterday, but now you are not sure whether you made it *ṭāhir* or not. In this case, you need to take it as being *najis* still, and therefore make it *ṭāhir*. The opposite to this also applies. If you are sure that something is *ṭāhir*, you should consider it as such until you are certain that it has become *najis*. You do not need to investigate anything further.

3 Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 3, P. 467.

Activity 2.1b: The Conditions for Establishing Najāsah

For each of the following conditions, come up with an example for each of them where *najāsah* would be established with certainty:

When you are sure that something is najis.	Your Example:
When a person who is in possession of an object says that it is najis.	Your Example:
When one or more just or reliable person(s) state that something is najis and/or provide a reason.	Your Example:

In previous years, we learned that there are various agents that can help make things *ṭāhir*, and that the most common and important agent is water. Water used to make things *ṭāhir* must itself be *ṭāhir* and not mixed (plain water). The *najis* thing must be washed with water until no particles of *najāsah* remain and the water flowing off the *najis* object is not soiled with any *najāsah*. For example, if a shirt has blood in it, it needs to be washed with clean, plain water until the blood is removed from the shirt, and the water flowing off the shirt is not tinged with blood.

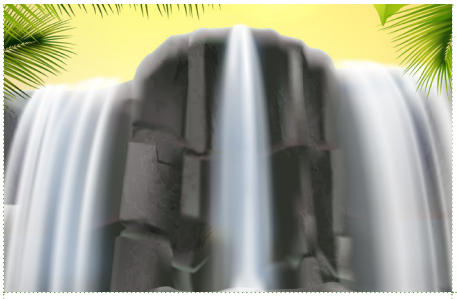
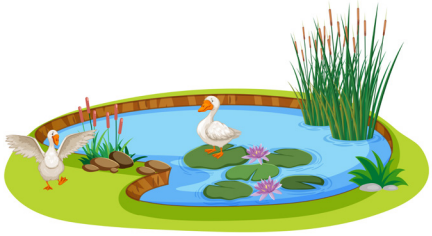
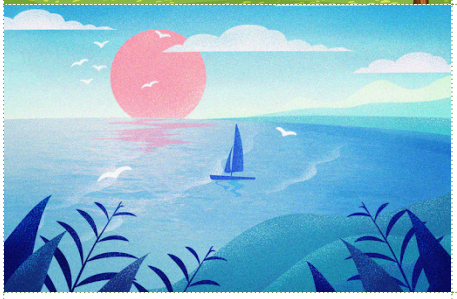
In this lesson, we will review some of the rules we learned in previous years, as well as learn some additional rules regarding the process of making things *ṭāhir*.

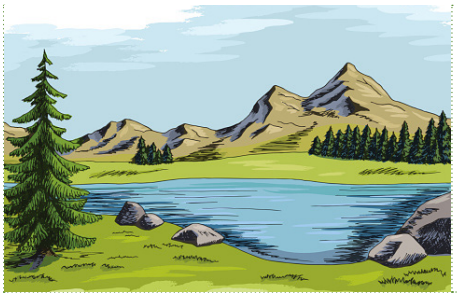
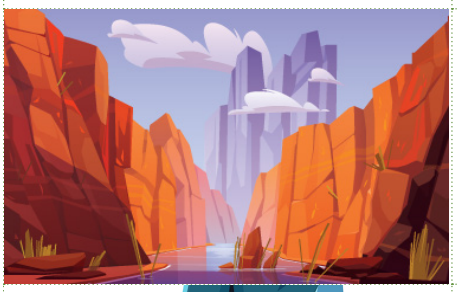
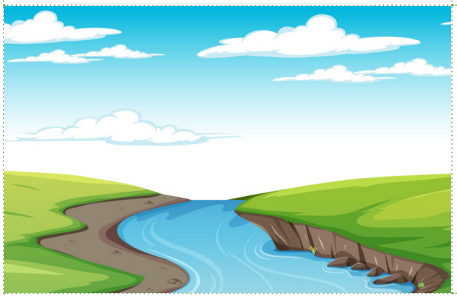
CATEGORIES OF WATER

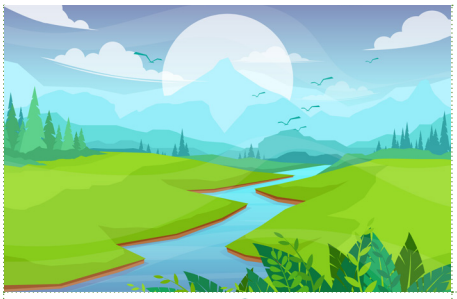
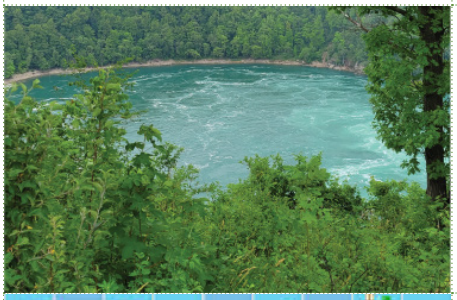
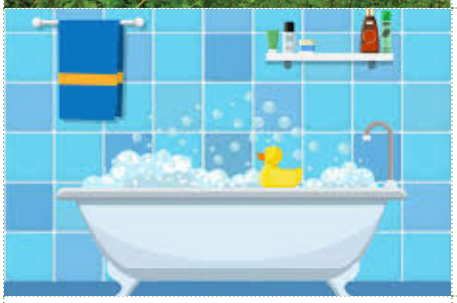
	KURR WATER	QALĪL WATER
Description	*Kurr* water is a body of water whose volume is equivalent to a cube that is 3.5 hand spans wide, long, and deep, or about 384 litres, or 101 US liquid gallons.	Water that is not running and is less than *kurr.*
Examples	Lakes, rivers, large swimming pools, large ponds, water from faucets/taps.	Buckets, cups, watering cans.
If najāsah falls in it, what happens?	If *najāsah* falls into *kurr* water, then the water is still considered *ṭāhir*, as long as the smell, taste, and/or color of the water does not change. The water will become *najis* if the smell, taste, or color changes.	If *najāsah* falls into *qalīl* water, then the *qalīl* water will become *najis*, no matter what. If you pour *qalīl* water over *najāsah*, then the water that drops after making contact with that thing is *najis*.
Examples	If a drop of blood falls into a standard swimming pool, then that water is still considered *ṭāhir* because the swimming pool is an example of *kurr* water.	If you are helping in the kitchen and you cut yourself and your blood drips into a pot of water, then that water has now become *najis*, even if its color does not change.

Activity 2.1c: Categories of Water and the Impact of Najāsah

Use the table above to help you identify whether the type of water mentioned below would become *najis* (impure) or remain *ṭāhir* (pure) if some *najāsah* fell into it.

TYPE OF WATER		NAJIS	ṬĀHIR
	Waterfall		
	Pond		
	Well		
	Ocean		
	Swimming Pool		

TYPE OF WATER		NAJIS	ṬĀHIR
	Lake		
	Watering Can		
	Ravine		
	Puddle		
	Water Bottle		
	Stream		

TYPE OF WATER		NAJIS	ṬĀHIR
	River		
	Pot		
	Bay		
	Bathtub		
	Tap Water		

OTHER PURIFYING AGENTS (MUṬAHHIRĀT)

1. Using the Earth to Purify

The earth here means surfaces such as soil, rock, and sand.

Example: Ali was walking home from school when he noticed that he had stepped on dog waste while walking on the grass. Beside the grass, there was a dirt patch, so Ali rubbed his shoes while walking on this dirt patch to get rid of the waste. After walking a few metres and rubbing his shoes, he got rid of the excrement. In this way, Ali made his shoes *ṭāhir* once again, and purified them.

The rule is that we cannot make our shoes or feet *ṭāhir* from any *najāsah* that did not come from the earth. For example, let us say that some blood drops from a small cut on your hand, and lands on the bottom of your shoes while you are seated. You decide to make your shoes *ṭāhir*, so you walk on dirt for a while. Does this make your shoes *ṭāhir*? No, it will not because the blood did not come from what was already on the ground—it came from your hand.

We should also remember that the earth cannot make things like our pants or other parts of our body *ṭāhir*.

As well, remember that the earth you are using to make your feet or shoes *ṭāhir* should be dry and *ṭāhir*.

Activity 2.1d: The Earth as a Purifying Agent (Muṭahhir)

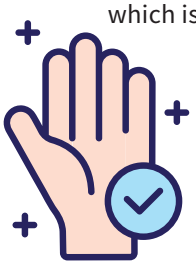
Which of the following situations qualifies as purity *(ṭahārah)* achieved by using the earth? Place a checkmark to identify the valid scenarios, or an X to designate the incorrect usage of this purifying agent.

SCENARIO [4]	CORRECT USAGE
1. The inside of an impure utensil is washed three times with soil.	
2. After walking for some time, the smell, color, or small particles of impurity that cannot be seen still remain on the sole of one's foot or shoe. Nonetheless, the shoe is considered *ṭāhir*.	
3. Your socks have become *najis* from some blood on your toe, so you put on your shoes and walk on dry earth to make them *ṭāhir* again.	
4. The bottom of a walking stick, the bottom of an artificial leg, the wheel of a car or cart, and similar things are automatically made *ṭāhir* after they become *najis* because they travel on the ground.	
5. After the impure sole of one's foot or shoe has become pure by walking, the area on the sides of the sole that usually becomes dirty with mud also becomes pure.	
6. Walking on a rug, or on grass will purify the soles of the feet.	
7. If the mouth of a utensil that a dog has licked is narrow, soil must be poured into it and the utensil must be shaken vigorously so that the soil reaches all parts of it; thereafter, it must be washed.	
8. Some kind of *'ayn an-najāsah* splashes onto the hem of your pants. You sit in the sand and move your legs around until your pant leg is fully covered by sand. It is now *ṭāhir*.	

4 Āyatullāh Sīstānī, Islamic Laws: Muṭahhirāt - Earth, and can be found at: https://www.sistani.org/english/book/48/2142/

2. Subjection (Tabaʿiyyah)

In simple words, the process of 'subjection' is when 'a *najis* thing becomes *ṭāhir* as a result of making another *najis* thing—which is somehow related to it—*ṭāhir* as well.'



For example, if I am holding my *najis* shirt to wash it, once the shirt becomes *ṭāhir*, my hands also become *ṭāhir* and I do not need to wash them separately.

STOP AND REFLECT: Can you think of another instance where a *najis* thing undergoes subjection and then becomes *ṭāhir?*

3. Becoming a Muslim

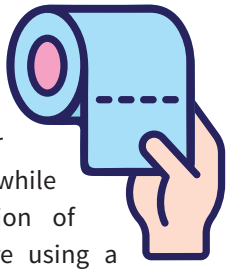
Once a non-Muslim becomes a Muslim, they immediately become *ṭāhir*. Before this, if for example they were an atheist, most *marājiʿ* state that their body, sweat, and saliva were *najis*. But as soon as they declare their belief in Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, they become *ṭāhir*. If however, their clothing or body contains any external impurities (like blood or urine), then they will not become *ṭāhir* unless they are purified (in the Islamic way).

4. Removal of ʿAyn an-Najāsah

In most cases, we need to wash things to make them *ṭāhir*, and it is not enough just to remove the *najāsah*. For example, if there is a drop of blood on your hand, it is not enough that you just wipe the blood off your hand with a tissue to make it *ṭāhir*. After wiping the blood off, you need to pour water on the spot where the blood was in order to make it *ṭāhir*.

However, there are certain situations where we can just remove the particles of *najāsah* and that is enough for that area to become *ṭāhir*. The most important examples of this are the inner parts of the human body, such as the inside of the mouth, nose, or inner ears. Let us say that one of these areas becomes *najis* with blood, once we remove that blood, the area becomes *ṭāhir* and there is no need to wash the inside of the nose, mouth, or ears. However, if there are foreign objects in the mouth, like crowns or dentures, then these do need to be rinsed.

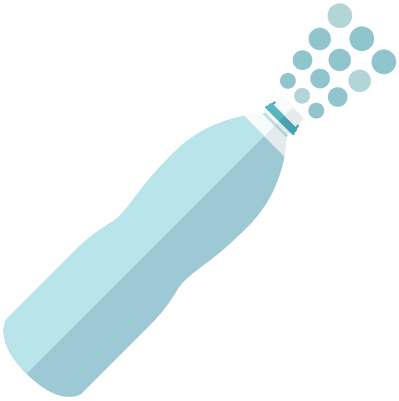
RULES OF EMPTYING THE BLADDER AND BOWEL



It is not permissible to keep the front or back of one's body toward the *qiblah* while relieving oneself. Knowing the direction of the *qiblah* is therefore necessary before using a bathroom.

Urine: The urinary outlet does not become pure with anything other than water, and washing it once is sufficient, although the recommended precaution is that it should be washed twice, and it is even better to wash it three times.

Faeces: If the rear part is washed with water, then one should ensure that no trace of faeces are left on it. However, there is no harm if the color or smell of it remains. If it is washed thoroughly in the first instance leaving no particles of stool, then it is not necessary to wash it again.



Activity 2.1e: Ṭahārah and Najāsah FAQs Fact-Checking Activity

Imagine that you are interning with the local scholar of your Islamic Center to answer questions, and under his guidance, you are responsible for moderating a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) column that will appear in your local Islamic Center newsletter. The following questions have been submitted by readers of the column. You are responsible for gathering the correct information to formulate an accurate and instructive response to each question. Using the guidance found in this lesson, how would you provide readers with the proper facts and solutions for the following situations or questions?

FAQ COLUMN QUESTION	YOUR FINDINGS OR SOLUTIONS
1. If you give a dog a bath, will it become clean? If yes, will it become *ṭāhir* as well?	
2. The bathroom floor at the mall was all wet, so I warned all my friends to roll up their pants before they go in, or else their clothes will become *najis*. Did I do the right thing in this scenario?	
3. Can a Muslim who rents a fully furnished house in the West, consider everything in it to be *ṭāhir* as long as they do not find any trace of *najis* things in it, even if the previous occupant was a non-Muslim, and kept a dog at home?	
4. I have a pair of leather-looking shoes that say "Made in Italy." For the life of me, I cannot figure out whether they are made of real leather, or fake, synthetic leather. Today, in the heavy rain, my pant cuffs touched my shoes. Can I pray with those same pants?	
5. There is a new face cream that I want to try on, but before doing so I carefully look at its ingredients. It does have an ingredient that sounds like it could be from an animal product. Am I allowed to use it?	
6. A mosquito was really annoying me and I could not stand it anymore. I smacked the mosquito when it landed on my arm, but when I did that, some of its blood splattered onto my shirt. Is that blood *najis*?	
7. I crack open an egg, ready to fry up a nice sunny side up—but then I see a speck of blood in it! What do I do now?	

Activity 2.1f: Review Questions:

Analyze each of following scenarios from the perspective of *ṭahārah* and *najāsah*. For each of them, determine if the object in question is *ṭāhir* or *najis*. Place a checkmark in the appropriate column:

SCENARIO	ṬĀHIR	NAJIS
a. I was playing in the park and a dog rubbed itself against my clothing. There was no transfer of any wetness. Is my clothing *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
b. A new Muslim reverted to Islam and recited their *shahādah*. Earlier in the day, they played football and their shirt got a bloodstain on it. Is that shirt *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
c. The class hamster did its droppings on the counter. Is that part of the counter *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
d. We cracked open an egg and found three tiny blood spots in the yolk. Is that yolk *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
e. I bought a second-hand bike from a store, and I am not sure who the previous owner was. Is the bike *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
f. I left my umbrella in the park, and when I came back after an hour to retrieve it, I am sure it was used by someone else, but I do not know who. Is the umbrella *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
g. A mosquito bit me and then flew away. I ran after it and caught it in my fist. When I opened up my hand, I saw some blood. Is my hand *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
h. A drop of blood falls into a swimming pool. Is that pool water *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
i. A pack of frozen vegetables had moisture on the bag which the cashier picked up and scanned with their bare hands before placing it in my shopping bag. Is that bag of vegetables (and anything else it came into contact with) *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
j. Is hand sanitizer which contains a certain percentage of alcohol *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		
k. Is an exquisite dessert that has a tiny amount of rum in it *ṭāhir* or *najis*?		

2.2 Wuḍūʾ, Ghusl, and Tayammum

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the correct method for performing *wuḍūʾ*.
- Explore discrepancies between different Muslim sects on washing versus wiping the feet for *wuḍūʾ,* and analyze the evidence for why we are told to wipe the feet.
- Investigate the differences between Muslims on the direction of washing the hands until the elbows, and explain the reasoning for washing from the elbow down.
- Identify *ghusl irtimāsī* and *ghusl tartībī* as the two forms of major ablution.
- Detail the conditions which make *ghusl* necessary, and describe the process for each type of *ghusl*—including the necessary precautions, optional steps, and additional tips.
- Outline the conditions which necessitate a *ghusl* after touching a dead body.
- Review the circumstances for when *tayammum* should be performed, and the correct process and manner for performing it.
- Explain the items that can be used for *tayammum,* and the order in which they should be sought out.

In previous years, we learned the method of doing *wuḍūʾ* and some of the rules related to it. In this lesson, we will review the correct method of performing *wuḍūʾ* before reviewing the rules and exploring the specific protocols.

PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF WUḌŪʾ

We will start the lesson with a practical demonstration of *wuḍūʾ*. Each student will need to demonstrate the correct *wuḍūʾ* technique at the start of the lesson. If you need to revise this process, you can check the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFwMLNE90oQ&t=220s

Activity 2.2a: Procedural Writing

Procedural writing is simply any text that provides instructions in a simple, step-by-step format. The name comes from the fact that the reader must follow a procedure if they wish to carry out the instructions. Choose one from the following three tasks, and write step-by-step instructions for the task that someone new to the process could easily follow:

a) Blow a (soap) bubble

b) Skip rope

c) Make a milkshake

1. What were your key considerations for making sure that your instructions were easy to follow? Was it order, clarity, action words, or…?

2. Why is this an important connection to make when discussing *wuḍūʾ*?

WIPING THE FEET IN WUḌŪʾ

As followers of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, we **wipe our feet** when we are performing *wuḍūʾ*. You may have noticed other Muslims **washing their feet** during *wuḍūʾ*. In this section of the lesson, we will look at the evidence regarding this aspect of *wuḍūʾ* and how it should be performed.

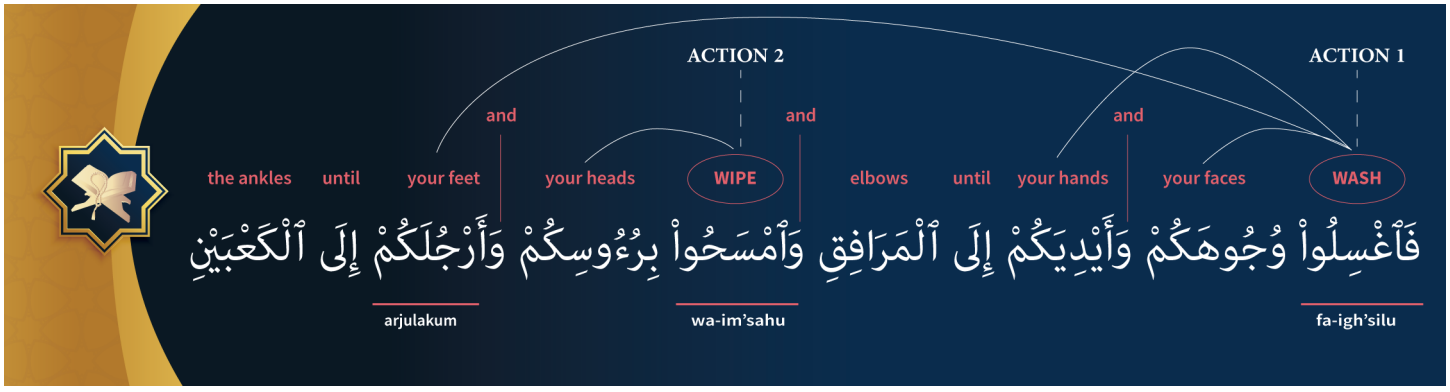
1. The Noble Qurʾān

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فاغْسِلُواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُواْ بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

"O you who believe! When you intend (to perform) your prayers, wash your faces and your arms up to the limit of the elbows and wipe (by passing wet hands over) your head and your feet up to the ankles." [1]

This Qurʾānic verse which explains the command to perform *wuḍūʾ* clearly says that we should **wipe our feet**. It couples feet with the head and commands us to wipe both of these areas. The following diagram[2] shows how the command to wash applies to the face and arms, while the command to wipe applies to the head and feet:

Some people present complicated grammatical arguments to try to contest the meaning of the verse, and on this basis, they take the verse to mean that we are commanded to wash our feet in *wuḍūʾ*. The following diagram[3] illustrates this complex grammatical argument:



1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 6.
2 Islam, J. (2012, February 28). *Washing or wiping the feet in wudu (ablution)*. The Quran and Its Message. https://quransmessage.com/articles/washing-wiping%20FM3.htm.
3 Islam, J. (2012, February 28). *Washing or wiping the feet in wudu (ablution)*. The Quran and Its Message. https://quransmessage.com/articles/washing-wiping%20FM3.htm.

However, it is clear to anyone who understands basic Arabic that the above explanation is NOT correct, rather the verse indicates the above scenario and thus the feet must be wiped, not washed.

2. The Narrations

The Sunnī school of thought has narrations that indicate we need to wash our feet, but others that indicate we need to wipe our feet. Let us look at some of **their own narrations** that indicate we need to **wipe** our feet:

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"The prayer of none of you will be complete unless you perform it as Allah has commanded: 'Washing of the face and arms up to the elbows, and wiping part of the head and the feet to the ankles.'"* [4]

Ibn ʿAbbās said: *"People refused to do anything except wash (the feet), but I do not find [anything] in the Book of Allah except [the command of] wiping [the feet in wuḍūʾ]."* [5]

In order to not contradict their traditions—what they understand to mean that a person should wash their feet—one argument that some Sunnīs present is that when someone washes something, they end up wiping it as well. Another argument that some of their scholars present is that washing the feet is more hygienic than wiping them. However, the *wuḍūʾ* itself is a religious rule set by Allah ﷻ. We cannot change or modify it according to our thoughts and opinions—we must follow the rules of Allah ﷻ to the letter, exactly like He has commanded for us to do. Washing is different from wiping. Also, if someone's feet are dirty, they can wash away any dirt and then dry their feet prior to starting *wuḍūʾ*.

It is clear from the evidence that the Qurʾān and the narrations indicate that the feet should be wiped (not washed) during *wuḍūʾ*. Therefore, if we are questioned regarding this practice, we should be confident in being able to explain why we do this. Of course, it is always important to respect others' views and practices, and we should never be aggressive or offensive when we discuss these issues with our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters.

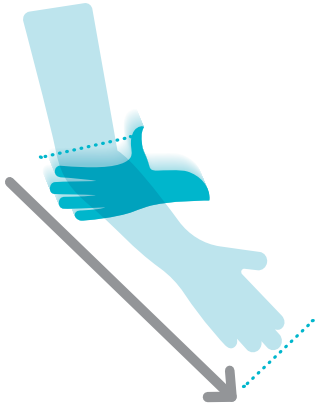
THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What is the fallacy—a mistaken belief, especially one based on unsound argument—in the statement about washing the feet being more "hygienic" in the process of *wuḍūʾ*?

WASHING FROM THE ELBOW DOWN

You may have also noticed that some Muslims wash their arms from their hands **up** to their elbows, rather than from their elbows **down** to their hands. The argument they present for this is that the Noble Qurʾān states *"'ilal-marāfiq." "Marāfiq"* means elbows, and they argue that *"ila"* means "to," so they claim this verse is saying "wash up to the elbows."

However, this is not a correct understanding of the verse. The *"ila"* in this verse does not mean "to" in the sense of a direction. Rather, it means "up to the limit of." When the Noble Qurʾān commands us to wash our arms, we also need to know how far to wash—up to the shoulder, the elbow, or the wrist? This is because the word *"yad"* يَد (plural: أيدي) in Arabic can mean one of three things: the hand—from the fingertips up until the wrist, the segment of the arm—from the fingertips up to the elbow, or the entire arm—from the fingertips up to the shoulder. Therefore, the Noble Qurʾān clarifies that we need to wash our arms **up to the limit of the elbow** (the second meaning of the word يَد). It does not specify the **direction** of that washing. We learn the direction of washing from the narrations that describe how the Prophet ﷺ performed *wuḍūʾ*, which was to start at the elbow and wash down to the fingertips.



4 Suyūṭi, Jalāl ad-Dīn, *Ad-Durr al-Manthur*, 3:27 (Ahlus Sunnah Source).
5 *Ad-Durr al-Manthur*, 3:27.

GHUSL

There are two types of ablutions in Islam: ***wuḍū***ʾ and ***ghusl***. We have already discussed *wuḍūʾ* which is a partial washing/wiping of the body. The other type of ablution is called *ghusl* (ritual bathing).

GHUSL:
washing the entire body in a certain manner with the intention of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ.

Ghusl, in the Arabic language, literally means 'the purity that one attains after washing and removing dirt from something.' The *fiqh* definition of *ghusl* is 'washing the entire body in a certain manner with the intention of becoming closer to Allah ﷻ.' Through *ghusl*, a person attains spiritual purity. Thus, *ghusl* is an important part of a person's worship *(ʿibādah)*.

In this lesson, we will briefly review how to perform *ghusl*. We will discuss the reasons for needing to do *ghusl* in other lessons.

HOW DO WE PERFORM GHUSL?

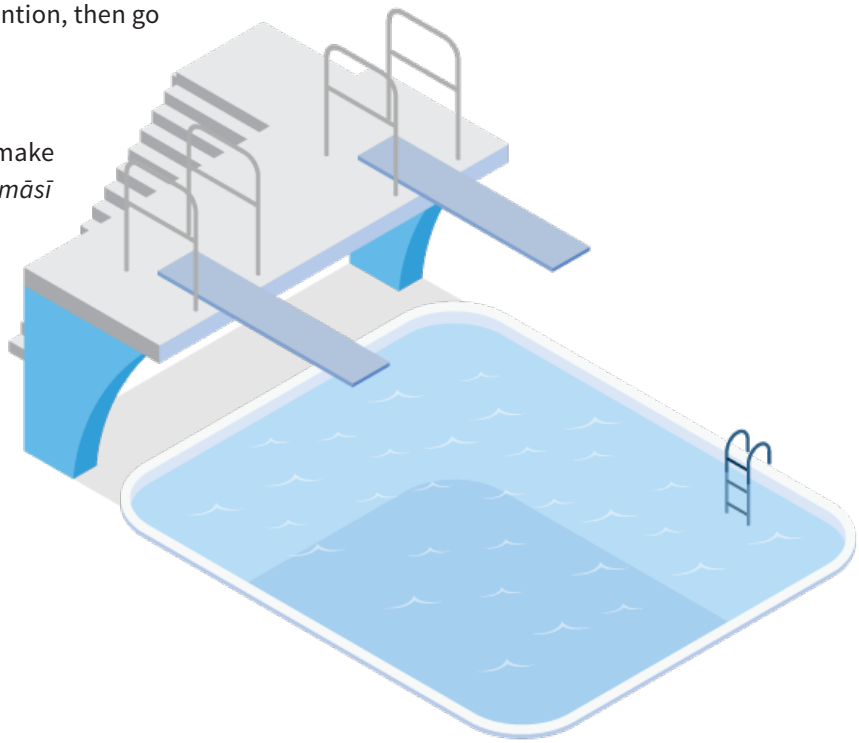
Ghusl can be performed in two ways: *irtimāsī* (immersive) and *tartībī* (sequential). *Ghusl irtimāsī* is when you submerge your entire body underwater. This must be done all at once, therefore it is less common. *Ghusl tartībī,* on the other hand, is sequential, meaning that certain body areas must be washed before the next.

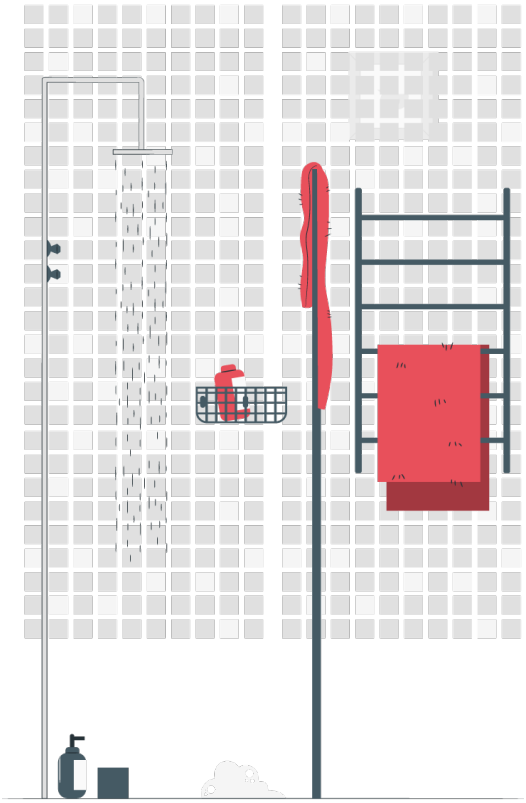
The steps for ghusl irtimāsī (immersive ritual bathing) are as follows:

1. Have the correct *niyyah* (intention).
2. Submerge your entire body all at once underwater (for example, by diving, or jumping into a large body of water). If you are already in the water, then take one part of your body out of the water, make the intention, then go underwater once again.

Guiding points:

- If there is something *najis* on the body, then one must make sure it is removed during the process of *ghusl* in the *irtimāsī* method.
- If a person is performing this form of *ghusl* while wearing clothes (for example, in a pool), then one needs to make sure to adjust one's clothing while underwater to allow that water to reach all parts of the body.





The steps for ghusl tartībī (sequential ritual bathing) are as follows:

1. Make sure that any barriers which would block water from reaching any part of the body have been removed.
   - Examples of barriers include: nail polish (even the breathable ones), paint, band-aids, etc. A barrier in this case would be anything that prevents water from reaching that area. Henna or ink that has been absorbed into the skin are not considered barriers because the skin is not covered up by them.
2. Make the intention of performing *ghusl* for the sake of achieving closeness to Allah ﷻ and in obedience to Him; and the reason for that *ghusl* (if there is a specific reason, for example: *ghusl* for the day of Friday, or after one's menstruation cycle, etc.).
   - The intention does not have to be said verbally out loud—as long as you know what you are doing and why you are doing it, that is enough for your intention to be valid.
3. If you are already in the shower, then you need to step out of the flow of water and then step back into it before you start your actual *ghusl*. When moving on to the next part of the *ghusl*, it is again important to step out of the water, then back into it for the next part. This particular rule is a ruling of Āyatullāh Sīstānī and is an obligatory precaution; therefore, you can refer to the rulings of other *marājiʿ* who do not require this movement of going out of the flow of water and back into it if you want.
4. Wash the head and neck, making sure water reaches every part.
   - Some *marājiʿ* say that it is better to run your hands over all parts of the body. There is no need to go inside of the ears when you are washing your head.
   - If you are standing under a shower head, there is no problem if the rest of your body gets wet when you are washing your neck.
   - Short hair that is considered part of the body must be washed.
   - As for long hair:
     - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, It is not obligatory to wash long hair.
     - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, as per obligatory precaution, long hair must be washed.
5. Washing the body: do we need to wash the right side first?
   - According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, after washing the head and neck, one can simply wash the entire body. There is no need to wash the right side first, then the left side. However, it is better to wash the right one first.
   - According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, per obligatory precaution, the right side must first be washed, and then the left side.
   - When washing the body, we should make sure that the water reaches every part (a person can be under the shower and water can be reaching all places, but they are making the intention for the right side and then the left side, and following the necessary rules to step out of the flow of water between the parts if need be).

Activity 2.2b: Reviewing the Rules of Ghusl Tartībī

1. Number the following steps for performing *ghusl tartībī* according to the order in which they should be done:

STEPS IN GHUSL TARTĪBĪ	ORDER OF PERFORMANCE
Washing the body and making sure that the water reaches every part.	
Make the intention of performing *ghusl* for the sake of achieving closeness to Allah ﷻ and in obedience to Him.	
Wash the head and neck, making sure that the water reaches every part.	
Remove barriers that would block water from the body.	
If you are already in the shower, you need to step out of the flow of water, then step back in to start your *ghusl*. (According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī)	

2. Differentiating between obligatory *(wājib)*, obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*, and optional *(mustaḥab)* aspects of *ghusl tartībī.*

For the following steps, identify whether the step is an obligatory one, whether it falls under the category of obligatory precaution, or if it is an optional step, according to the rulings of a chosen *marjaʿ*. Place a checkmark under the correct column.

Chosen *marjaʿ*: _____

STEPS IN GHUSL TARTĪBĪ	OBLIGATORY	OBLIGATORY PRECAUTION	OPTIONAL
Removing barriers such as nail polish, paint, or band-aids.			
Making an intention before beginning the *ghusl*.			
Stepping out of the flow of water, then back into it to start one's *ghusl*.			
Stepping out of the flow of water, then back into it for each consecutive part of the *ghusl*.			
Wash the head and neck, making sure that the water reaches every part.			
It is better to run your hands over all parts of the body.			
Short hair that is considered part of the body must be washed.			
Long hair must be washed.			
After washing the head, wash the right side of the body, then the left side.			

Tips for Ghusl Tartībī:

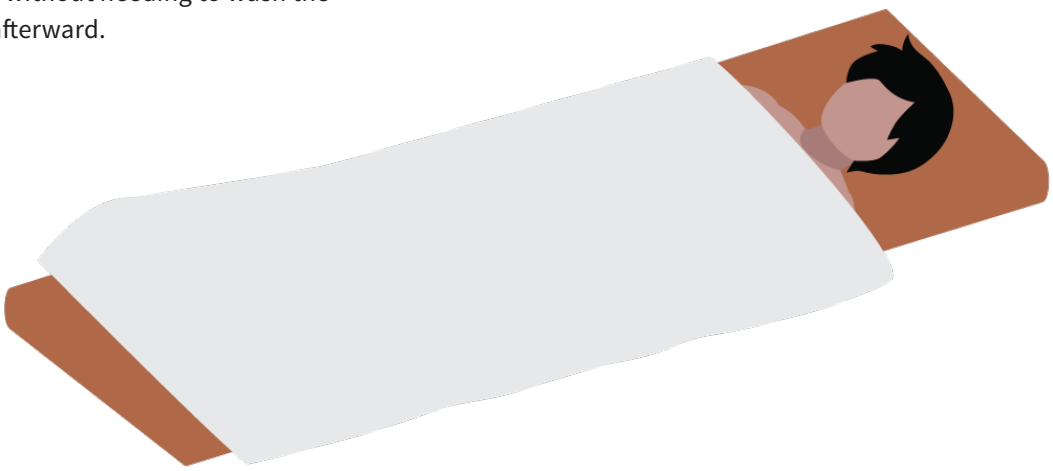
1. If you have long nails, you need to make sure that the dirt that is underneath the excess part is removed in order to do the *ghusl* properly.
2. If there is something *najis* on you, then as part of washing the body, you can wash off that *najis* thing, and then wash the skin underneath.
3. While washing each section of the parts of *ghusl*, it is better if you wash extra to make sure that you have washed all of the necessary parts completely (for example, as you are washing the right side, wash some of the left side as well).
4. It is better to wash central areas, such as the entire belly button and the private parts, with each side of the body.
5. Unlike *wuḍūʾ*, when washing a particular part, you do not need to wash from the top to the bottom, nor do you have to use your hands to wash over that part.
6. Unlike *wuḍūʾ*, continuity is not a condition. Therefore, if you wash your head and neck, and then decide to shampoo your hair, and then wash your right side, that is acceptable. It also means that if you miss a part of the left side (for example) and realize later on, then you can wash just that part after the *ghusl* without restarting all over again. According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, even if you miss a part of the right side and realize later, you can wash just that part after the *ghusl* without restarting.
7. If you realize after the entire *ghusl* is finished that you missed a part of your body, then you have to restart from that point. For example, if you come out of the shower and realize you missed your right hand, then you should:
   - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Khamenei: wash your right hand only, then your left side fully.
   - ▷ According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, you only need to wash your right hand without needing to wash the left side of the body afterward.

GHUSL IF ONE TOUCHES A DEAD BODY

We may come across situations in life where we have some contact with a dead body, such as while trying to resuscitate someone who then dies in the process, or dissecting bodies at school, etc. If we touch a dead body, then there are certain rules that apply which we must follow. It is important to note that these rules do not apply if we are wearing gloves, or no direct physical contact is made, when we touch the dead body.

- If the body has not gone cold yet (i.e. if the person just passed away), then we do not need to perform any *ghusl* ourselves (this does not refer to the *ghusl* for the deceased person).
- If it is the body of a non-Muslim person and it has gone cold, then we ourselves must perform a *ghusl*.
- If it is the body of a Muslim, and the body has gone cold but has not been washed yet (i.e. given the *ghusl al-mayyit* (washing of the dead body) that is obligatory when a person dies), then we ourselves must perform a *ghusl*.
- If it is the body of a Muslim and the body has been washed with *ghusl al-mayyit* (washing of the dead body), then we ourselves do not need to perform a *ghusl*.

The method of performing this *ghusl* (after touching a dead body) is exactly the same as the method we learned earlier in this lesson.



Activity 2.2c: Ghusl After Touching a Dead Body

Using the table below, place a checkmark under the column "We Need to Perform *Ghusl*" if the condition specified meets the requirements for having to do *ghusl* after touching a dead body.

NON-MUSLIM		MUSLIM	
CONDITION OF THE DEAD BODY	**WE NEED TO PERFORM GHUSL**	**CONDITION OF THE DEAD BODY**	**WE NEED TO PERFORM GHUSL**
Not yet cold		Not yet cold	
Has become cold		Has become cold	
Cold and not washed (not given *ghusl* yet)		Cold and not washed (not given *ghusl* yet)	
Cold and washed (already given the necessary *ghusl al-mayyit)*		Cold and washed (already given the necessary *ghusl al-mayyit)*	

TAYAMMUM

When to Perform Tayammum?

There are certain situations, when instead of *wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl*, a person has to purify oneself with clean earth or soil—this is called *tayammum*. However, this alternative can only be done in various specific scenarios. Some examples of when one must perform *tayammum* instead of *wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl* include the following:

- There is no water available (and we have made a sincere effort to look for some).
- There is not enough water for *wuḍūʾ*.
- Using water is harmful for us.
- It is very difficult or dangerous to find water.
  - Difficulty does not mean inconvenient; if it is possible to find water during the time for *ṣalāḥ*, this means water is available to you.
- Whatever water is available is not permissible to use.
  - For example, if a water source has a sign that says "For drinking ONLY," then we cannot use it for anything else; or if there is some water but it says private property; or if the water is not for public use and permission must be sought in order to use it. In regards to public water, such as water available through public washrooms or sinks, the permission is implied because the washroom is for public use. Similarly, permission is implied if we go to a relative's or friend's house and are about to pray and you know that they are okay if you use their water for *wuḍūʾ*.
- There is very little time left for the prayer, and *tayammum* would take less time to perform than *wuḍūʾ*.
  - For example, you wake up with just a few minutes left for *Fajr* because you overslept, and if you do *wuḍūʾ*, then you will miss the time for *ṣalāḥ*, in this case you must perform *tayammum*.

STOP AND REFLECT: Make a list of some practical scenarios you can think of where *tayammum* would be the appropriate alternative to *wuḍūʾ*. For example, going camping in the middle of the woods where there are no nearby bodies of water and your own water supply is sparse.

HOW TO PERFORM TAYAMMUM
(PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION)

PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF TAYAMMUM

NIYYAH: Make your intention to perform *tayammum* for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

Any rings on one's fingers must first be removed. Like in *wuḍūʾ*, any obstruction on the forehead or hands must also be removed.

STEP 1: Strike the palms of both hands simultaneously on earth, sand, or stone (in order of preference) that is dry and clean. When possible, some amount of earth/sand/dust should stick on your hands after striking.

Guiding points:

a) Strike both hands down together—not one after the other.

b) Strike with some force—do not just place your hands on the surface.

c) Strike with the entire hand (palm and fingers), not just part of it.

d) It is recommended *(mustaḥab)* to shake off any excess earth/sand/dust that comes on your hands before performing the next step.

STEP 2: Wipe both palms together from the beginning of the forehead where the hair grows down to the bridge of the nose. Both sides of the forehead joining the ears and over the eyebrows should be included. Try to cover the entire forehead.

Guiding points:

a) Begin wiping with both wrists centered on the hairline next to each other.

b) Keep your fingers together.

c) Keep your palms curved slightly so they can properly cover the forehead.

d) Wipe down until right above nose and eyebrows (it is a recommended precaution—*iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab*—to wipe the eyebrows as well).

e) The entire palm and all the fingers should do the wiping.

f) Keep your hands and fingers together and centered on your forehead throughout the wiping.

g) Wipe the skin, not hair that has fallen down on the forehead.

h) Be sure to move your hands, not your head.

Then wipe the palm of the left hand over the back of the right hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips, and then wipe the palm of the right hand over the back of the left hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips.

Guiding points:

a) Start wiping with the pinkie of your wiping hand just above the wrist of the hand being wiped.

b) Curve your wiping hand slightly so that the hand being wiped is properly done.

c) Wipe until the end of the fingertips.

STEP 3: Strike the palms together on the earth, sand, or stone a second time just like in Step 1.

STEP 4: Wipe the left palm over the whole back of the right hand from the wrist bone to the fingertips. Then wipe the right palm over the whole back of the left hand from the wrist to the end of the fingers.

Note: These last two steps are a recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* as per Āyatullāh Sīstānī, and an obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)* according to Āyatullāh Khamenei.

You can watch this video for a practical demonstration of *tayammum* according to the rules of Āyatullāh Sīstānī (in this video, steps 3 and 4 have not been included): **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oh0gxMmyPSk**

OBJECTS FOR TAYAMMUM

The following things can be used to perform *tayammum* in the order shown. If soil is not available, then we can use sand, and so on as exemplified below.

1. Soil (from the earth)

2. Sand

3. Lump of clay or stone

4. Gypsum

5. Limestone

6. Mud

Activity 2.2d: Tayammum Object Hunt

Imagine that it is *ṣalāḥ* time and you are at a location where water is either inaccessible or permission to use the available water cannot be easily attained. As an alternative, you decide to do *tayammum*.

Using the objects listed above, make a list of items you may find in the following locations that could work as objects for performing *tayammum*. Make sure to list them in the order of use (should the first not be available, then an individual can use the next object according to the order provided above). You can visualize an actual location that you have visited for easy reference.

LOCATION	OBJECTS THAT CAN BE USED FOR TAYAMMUM
A house	• Potting soil
At school	
At a park	
In the woods	
At an office building	

Activity 2.2e: Fact-Checking

Imagine that you are interning with the local scholar of your Islamic Center to answer questions, and under his guidance, you are responsible for moderating a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) column that will appear in your local Islamic Center newsletter.

The following are some questions about *wuḍūʾ, ghusl,* and *tayammum* that have been submitted by readers of the column. You are responsible for gathering the correct information to formulate an accurate and instructive response to each question. Using the guidance provided in this lesson, how would you provide readers with the facts and solutions for the following situations or questions? You may seek out a secondary source if the answer is not easily found within this lesson.

FAQ COLUMN QUESTIONS	YOUR FINDINGS OR SOLUTIONS
1. Ali went to the masjid for the funeral rites of a relative. He touched the face of the deceased relative after the *ghusl al-mayyit* was completed. Does Ali have to perform a *ghusl* for having touched a dead body?	
2. A medical student touches a cadaver while wearing gloves. Do they need to perform *ghusl* for touching a dead person?	
3. Is it necessary to clean the body from impurities before performing an obligatory *ghusl*?	
4. While performing *ghusl*, is it necessary to place the hands over the body parts to guide the flow of water over it?	
5. I forgot to perform an obligatory *(wājib) ghusl,* then after four days, I remembered that I did not perform this *ghusl*. In this case, what is my obligation? Do I have to do *ghusl* and offer the lapsed (*qaḍāʾ* of the) prayers that I already offered?	
6. I am 18 years old. I did not know that I had to perform *ghusl* in certain situations when I was younger. All these years, I have been praying without having performed the necessary *ghusl* (I would just take a shower as normal, but I did not have the intention of *ghusl*). Do I need to offer the *qaḍāʾ* of my prayers for these last few years?	
7. I am 18 years old. I knew there was something called *ghusl* and I attempted to do it when I needed to, but I may have missed some parts or not performed it completely properly. Do I need to offer *qaḍāʾ* of my prayers for the last few years?	
8. Is the ink that has dried [on our hands, for example] a barrier to perform *wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl*?	
9. Is cream a barrier to water reaching the skin, and if so, should it be removed prior to performing *wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl*?	
10. When performing *tayammum*, does the back of my hand have to be *ṭāhir* (pure)?	

CHAPTER 3

Ṣalāh

3.1 Preliminaries to Prayer

3.2 Further Rules of Prayers

3.1 Preliminaries to Prayer

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Outline and list the conditions for performing the daily prayers or *ṣalāh*.
- Define the *qiblah* as the direction Muslims must face when reciting their prayers, and some methods for finding the *qiblah.*
- Identify the *'Waqt al-Faḍīlah'* or the 'preferred time' for performing each prayer, and understand the importance of prioritizing the prayers such that we pray as close as possible to the beginning of this window of time. Better yet is to recite our prayers at *'Awwal al-Waqt'* or 'prime time' which is right when the time for the prayer sets in.
- Discuss the conditions for the place where we choose to perform our prayers, and determine whether it is permissible to pray in certain settings or not.
- Emphasize the value of praying in a masjid, and also taking part in congregational prayers.
- Outline the conditions with regards to one's clothing in the prayers in order for the prayers to be correct.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some activities that you take part in simply because you understand the benefits of them in regards to your physical, emotional, or mental health and well-being? For example, brushing your teeth, exercising, etc. Take notes as needed.

Ṣalāh, or the daily prayer, is one of the most important obligations that Allah ﷻ has set out for us. It is a source of spiritual nourishment and a means for human beings to gain closeness to Allah ﷻ. There are a number of preliminary conditions that we need to ensure are present before we offer our *ṣalāh*. Some of these include:

Ṭahārah (Purity):

One must be *ṭāhir* (free from any impurities), and be in a state of *wuḍū'* in order to pray (this would also include having performed *ghusl* if that was obligatory upon a person). We have discussed the details of this in previous lessons.

Facing the direction of the qiblah:

One must be facing toward the Kaʿbah in Mecca.

The time of prayer:

Prayer must be offered within the correct time frame.

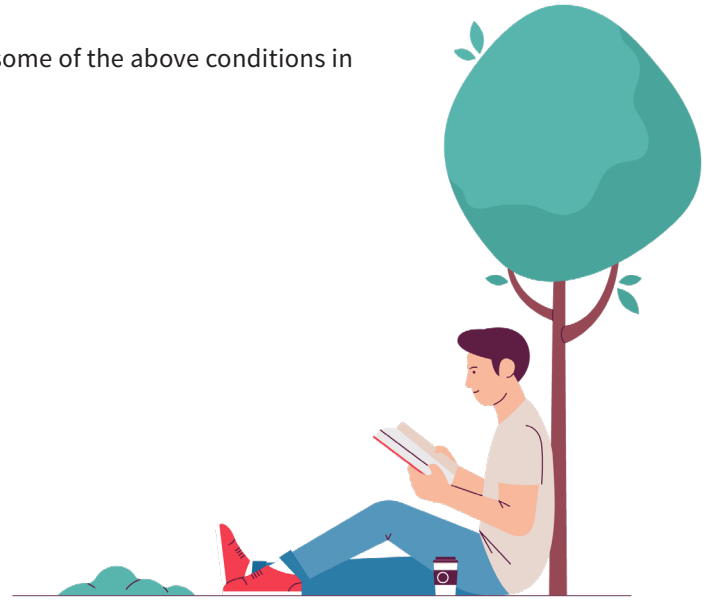
The place of prayer:

Prayer must be offered in an appropriate place.

The clothing for prayer:

The clothing one wears while offering the prayer must meet certain conditions.

In this lesson, we will discuss some of the above conditions in more detail.



FACING THE QIBLAH

All Muslims have to face a certain direction when reciting their prayers, which is known as the *qiblah*. Physically, the *qiblah* is the Kaʿbah which is in Mecca, Arabia, and wherever Muslims are, they have to face the direction of the Kaʿbah while praying.

Today, we have some very easy ways to find the direction of the *qiblah*, such as phone applications, electronic maps, and *qiblah* compasses. However, not all apps or devices are created equally! Sometimes, the app may rely on a phone's internal compass. If the compass is not correctly calibrated, the results will be skewed. Compasses that rely on the Earth's magnetic field can also be inaccurate due to a difference between magnetic north and true north. They can also be easily affected by metal objects such as pipes in the ground.

It is important to remember that we do not need to be very exact in finding out the direction of the *qiblah*. Praying in the general direction of the Kaʿbah is sufficient.

However, once we have used a more precise means to determine the direction of the *qiblah*, we do need to observe this direction, but not necessarily with exact scientific precision. A few degrees to the left or right is permissible.

When we do not have access to a phone application, map, or a *qiblah* compass, we can use the location of the sun to find out the direction of the *qiblah*. Once we figure out east or west by looking at the position of the sun in the morning or afternoon, we can then figure out the other directions and pray toward the general direction of the *qiblah* (e.g. north east if you live in the USA or Canada, and slightly north of west if you live in Australia).

If we are unable to use any of these tools to determine the direction of the *qiblah*, this does not mean that we should delay offering our prayers past its designated time. Instead, we should proceed in accordance with the ruling of our *marjaʿ*:

- **Āyatullāh Sīstānī:** Pray in any one direction. It is a recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* to pray in all four directions.
- **Āyatullāh Khamenei:** When the direction of the *qiblah* cannot be determined at all, this does not mean that one should delay offering their prayers. Instead, a person should pray in any one of the four possible directions. One should pray in all four directions as an obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*.

Activity 3.1a: Find the Qiblah Scavenger Hunt

Using any tool listed above for locating the direction of the *qiblah*, find and record the direction of the *qiblah* for the following areas. Note that in all of these locations, you are already inside the room. Use arrows to signify the direction you would face from your starting point.

Tool used for finding the *qiblah*: _____

LOCATION STARTING POINT	DIRECTION OF THE QIBLAH
Facing the doorway of your classroom	
Facing the doorway of your bedroom	
Facing the front entrance of your school	
Facing the entryway into your living room	
Facing the doorway into your *ṣalāh* hall or room at home	
Facing the entryway into your school library	

In a hypothetical or real scenario where the *qiblah* cannot be accurately determined, provide instructions for how to proceed with the prayer according to your *marjaʿ*.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

This ruling is according to: _____ (Insert the name of your *marjaʿ*)

PRAYER TIMES

The Importance of Praying on Time

It is highly recommended to recite prayers within their time of significant merit, which is known as *"Waqt al-Faḍīlah"* or the "preferred time." This window of time differs in length for each prayer, but on average it extends for about an hour from the beginning time of that prayer. Within this preferred time period, it is best to recite prayers as close as possible to the beginning of their time, which is known as *"Awwal al-Waqt"* or "prime time."

Giving importance to the preferred and prime times creates the spirit of punctuality and discipline within us, and also reflects our dedication and commitment to communicate with Allah ﷻ, and shows how much importance we give to our Creator and Nourisher.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said:

> "Whoever performs the obligatory prayers at the beginning of their times and observes their restrictions, the angels will raise that (prayer) up white and pure into Heaven. That prayer will say (to the reciter): 'May Allah preserve you as you preserved me, and entrust you to a generous angel as you looked after me.' But whoever performs the prayers after their appointed times with no excuse, and does not observe their restrictions, the angels will raise that (prayer) up black and dark. The prayer will shout (at the reciter): 'You disregarded me, may Allah disregard you, and may He not care for you, as you did not care for me.'" [1]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Imagine that you have an important job interview at a firm that you are keen to join. The interview is set for the following Monday at 9:30 am. What are some preparations you will make to ensure that you have a good interview? What arrangements will you undertake to ensure that you are punctual? Discuss with a partner what aspects of this scenario could parallel or serve as an analogy for performing our daily prayers.

The Prayer Times

There are specific timings that have been stipulated for us in which we must recite our daily prayers.

The time for the *Fajr* (morning) prayer is specific to it only, and is not shared with any other prayer. It extends from true dawn until sunrise.

The time for the two obligatory prayers—*Ẓuhr* (noon) and *ʿAṣr* (afternoon)—is shared between the two. This extends from solar noon (the astronomical mid-point of the day) until sunset.

The time for the two obligatory prayers—*Maghrib* (evening) and *ʿIshāʾ* (night)—is also shared between the two. This extends from when the night begins (the sun has set and the red glow in the sky after the sun sets has disappeared from the entirety of the Eastern sky)[2] until astronomical midnight.

1 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 3, P. 95.

2 What is intended by "the entirety of the Eastern sky" is the following: From the perspective of someone standing on Earth, the sky is like a great hollow dome above with the person standing at the center. The top of that dome, the point directly above one's head, is called the zenith; and where the dome meets Earth is called the horizon. The Eastern sky is the area between the Eastern horizon and the zenith. See https://courses.lumenlearning.com/astronomy/chapter/the-sky-above/.

Activity 3.1b: Determining Prayer Times

For your city, find the current starting time for each of the daily prayers listed below. Determine the prime time *(Awwal al-Waqt)* for that prayer, and record it in the table below. Use a reliable timetable that has been approved by a local scholar as a reference for the prayer time. Optionally, calculate the preferred times *(Waqt al-Faḍīlah)* using the following methods: [3]

FAJR	From the starting time of *Fajr* until 30 minutes later.
ẒUHR	From the starting time of *Ẓuhr* until 1.5 hours later.[4]
ʿAṢR	From the end of the prime time for *Ẓuhr* until 1.5 hours later.
MAGHRIB	From the starting time of *Maghrib* until 45 minutes later.[5]
ʿISHĀʾ	From the end of the prime time for *Maghrib* until 1.5 hours later.

PRAYER	Current Starting or 'Prime Time' (Awwal al-Waqt)	When the 'Preferred Time' (Waqt al-Faḍīlah) starts and ends for the prayer
Fajr		
Ẓuhr		
ʿAṣr		
Maghrib		
ʿIshāʾ		

3 These calculations are approximate. The actual calculations will vary depending on the time of year and location where a person is.
4 Sistani.org. Questions and Answers » Prayer - combining the two prayers, https://www.sistani.org/arabic/qa/0420/
5 Sistani.org. Questions and Answers » Prayer - combining the two prayers, https://www.sistani.org/persian/qa/0876/

RULES REGARDING THE PRAYER TIMES

It is *mustaḥab* (recommended) that we offer our prayers at the 'Prime Time' prescribed for them. We should avoid delaying our prayers without a good reason. Things such as watching television or playing a game are not reasonable excuses for delaying our prayers.

There are a few exceptions whereby we are allowed to delay our prayers, some of which include the following:

- Waiting to join *Ṣalātul Jamāʿah* (congregational) prayers
- Situations pertaining to rules of menstruation
- Instances where one has no access to water for *ghusl* or *wuḍūʾ*, but may get access to them later on
- Where a person is in doubt about some of the important rules of prayers and needs to learn them before being able to pray
- Other urgent situations

THE OPTION OF CONSECUTIVE PRAYERS

You may have noticed that Sunnī people usually do not pray their *Ẓuhr* and *ʿAṣr* prayers, or their *Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʾ* prayers consecutively (one after the other), rather they separate these prayers. Some of them may have asked you about why you are allowed to combine these two prayer times in Shīʿah Islam.

Most of the Sunnī schools of law allow the combining of the obligatory prayers only in the case of rain, travel, fear, or other emergencies.

The followers of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ usually combine the five prayers into three times, by praying *Ẓuhr* and *ʿAṣr* consecutively one after the other at around noontime, and praying *Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʾ* together after sunset. Combining the prayers does not mean reciting one prayer in place of two. Rather, it means reciting two prayers consecutively without a significant break between the two. Despite the objections of the Sunnīs, this practice is in complete agreement with the Qurʾān, as well as authentic traditions from the Prophet ﷺ.

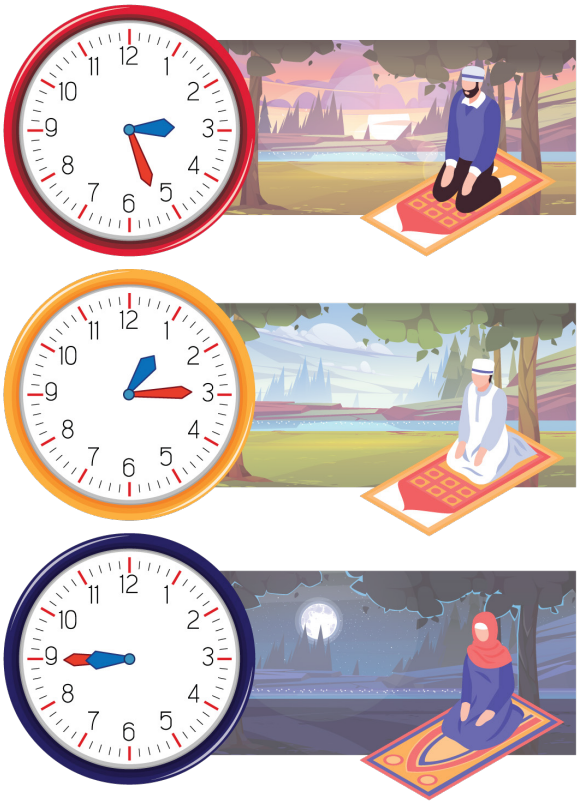
Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَىٰ غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ۝

"Establish the prayer [during the period] from the sun's decline until the darkness of the night, and [observe particularly] the dawn recital. Indeed, the dawn recital is witnessed [by the angels]." [6]

This verse from the Qurʾān clearly endorses our practice by showing that there are three, not five, prayer times: (1) at the time of the sun declining (*Ẓuhr* and *ʿAṣr* prayers); (2) at night (*Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʾ* prayers); and (3) at dawn (*Fajr* prayer). In addition, there are also authentic *aḥādīth* which testify that the Noble Prophet ﷺ used to combine his noon and afternoon prayers, and the evening and night prayers, without extenuating circumstances like fear, travel, or rain.

However, we should remember that it is recommended to wait a bit between the prayers and separate them so we recite them five separate times instead of combining them and reciting them three times. One of the best ways to do this is by reciting some extra, optional supplications after each prayer (known in Arabic as *taʿqībāt)*. It is also recommended to recite each daily prayer at the beginning of its prime time. However, separating them is not recommended if it means that we may forget to pray one of them, or if we will miss out on praying both prayers in congregation.



6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 78.

Activity 3.1c: Review Questions

1. According to the Qurʾān, there are:
   - **a.** Three prayer times
   - **b.** Five prayer times
   - **c.** Three prayer times only when it is raining

2. The best time to pray is at the beginning of the prayer time which is right after the *adhān*. This is referred to in Arabic as:
   - **a.** *Awwal al-Waqt*
   - **b.** *Waqt al-Faḍīlah*
   - **c.** The *wājib* time

3. Muhammad is traveling by road and the time for prayer sets in. He does not have any water with him for *wuḍūʾ*, but will reach his destination soon and will have access to water. Can he delay his prayers?
   - **a.** No, he must say his prayers on time
   - **b.** He can delay his prayers if he will have access to water soon for *wuḍūʾ*
   - **c.** It is not permissible to delay his prayers, so he should stop somewhere and find a source of water
   - **d.** Both A & C are correct

4. Ali just finished praying his *Ẓuhr* prayer at home and has to go out for some urgent work. Is he allowed to separate his prayer and offer his *ʿAṣr* prayer after a couple of hours?
   - **a.** As a Shīʿah, Ali must not separate his prayers
   - **b.** Yes he can, as long as he will have the time and opportunity to recite his *ʿAṣr* prayer later on while there is still time to do so
   - **c.** He cannot separate his prayers as this is not a case of fear or emergency

In this section, we will discuss the conditions for the place in which we perform our prayers. Before we begin the discussion, it is important to remember that we should not delay our prayers unnecessarily because most places are appropriate to pray on. If the conditions we are about to discuss are met, then we can pray in that place and should not delay our prayers.

1. The place of prayer should be permissible to use

We cannot pray in a place that we do not have permission to pray on. Therefore, if we are at someone's house or on their personal property, we cannot pray there without their permission. However, this rule does not apply to public places, or large lots of land, such as farms.

2. The place of prayer must be stable

The place for prayer should not have such a vigorous movement which would make normal standing, bowing *(rukūʿ)*, or prostration impossible. In fact, as an obligatory precaution, it should not prevent the body from being at ease. There is no harm in offering prayers in a car, on a boat, in railway trains, on a plane, or other vehicles, while they are motionless. It is also permissible to pray on these things if they are in motion but do not cause the body to sway excessively. As mentioned, praying on airplanes is also permissible, so one should learn the rules for this. One cannot use travel as an excuse to miss or delay one's prayers.

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

There are two options for reciting one's *ṣalāh* on an airplane:

1. If there is sufficient space somewhere to pray as you normally would, and you have permission from the airline staff to pray in that place, and are confident that you will be able to complete your prayer in that area, then you should pray there as you normally would.
2. If there is not enough space, or you do not have permission to use that space, and your prayer will become *qaḍāʾ* before you land (the time for that specific prayer will be over), then you can pray while staying in the area of your own seat. For *rukūʿ*, you can make the motion by bowing your head only, and sitting and placing your head on the tray table for *sujūd*. You would still need to face the direction of the *qiblah*, or as close as you possibly can to that direction given your limitations while doing this.

3. One must be relatively sure they can complete their prayer at that place

We may sometimes face a situation where we are not sure if we can complete our prayer at a particular place. This may be due to congestion caused by a huge crowd of people. We are not allowed to start our prayer in such a place. This rule is particularly important during *Ḥajj*, where the Sacred Masjid is often so full that one needs to remain at a distance from the Ka'bah in order to pray without having their prayer interrupted.

4. The place of prayer must be sufficiently spacious

The place of prayer must be spacious enough to allow the person to stand upright to be able to bow down (perform *rukūʿ*) and also go down into prostration (perform *sajdah)*. This is often an issue at *Ḥajj*, where due to large crowds of people it is not possible to bow down or prostrate properly, therefore one must find a suitably spacious place. It is not permissible to perform prostration on someone's back!

5. The place of prayer must be ṭāhir

We learned last year that the place in which a person is praying must be ritually pure *(ṭāhir)*. If it is impure *(najis)* but dry, then we can still pray on it, except for the place of *sujūd* which must be *ṭāhir* even if it is dry.

6. Men and women praying in the same area

If a man and a woman are praying in the same area, then:

- According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, the woman should pray behind the man. However, if there is a barrier between them, then it is okay for them to pray side by side or for the woman to pray in front of the man. If there is no barrier and they are more than 4.5 meters (5 yards) apart, then the man does not have to be in front.
- According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, if the two are more than a handspan apart, then the man does not have to be in the front.

Both of these rulings are according to obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*.

7. The place of prostration and place of one's feet must be somewhat same in height

The place where a person places one's head during prostration should not be more than four finger-widths higher or lower than the place of one's toes and knees. This rule applies when there is a height difference in the position of standing and the position of prostration, such as standing on the floor, but performing prostration on a mattress; or when there is a steady incline, such as when one is praying outdoors on a hill.

Activity 3.1d: Places to Pray

For each of the locations or vehicles in the table below, determine whether it is permissible or not to pray in that setting. Place a check mark under the correct column, and then briefly detail what additional conditions might be necessary to determine the permissibility of praying in this location.

PLACE FOR PRAYER	PERMISSIBLE	IMPERMISSIBLE	CONDITION(S) FOR DETERMINING PERMISSIBILITY

PLACE FOR PRAYER	PERMISSIBLE	IMPERMISSIBLE	CONDITION(S) FOR DETERMINING PERMISSIBILITY

PRAYING IN A MASJID

As we learned in previous years, it is highly recommended to pray inside a masjid—the rewards are far greater than a prayer recited at home. This is especially the case for people who live close to a masjid or an Islamic center.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever walks to a masjid with the intention of praying in congregation will get the equivalent of 70,000 good deeds for every step they take, and they will be raised that many levels." [7]

7 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mizān al-Ḥikmah*, Ḥadīth # 8302.

Activity 3.1e: Scenario-Based Discussions

1. Haider invited some friends to his house for dinner. He asked them to be at his house by *Maghrib* time so they could pray together. His friends are slightly delayed and will get to his house 20 minutes after the *adhān* of *Maghrib*. Should Haider wait for them and delay his prayers so as to benefit from the rewards of the prayer in congregation?

2. Riyaz is getting ready to offer his prayer in his room, but upon entering, he sees his sister praying there. He finds some space behind her and starts performing his prayer. His sister is *maḥram* to him. Is his prayer valid?

3. Hussein is on a plane and asks the air hostess if he can offer his prayers. The only space available is between the kitchen and the entrance to the washrooms. Despite him noticing how busy that area is, he proceeds with his prayer, disregarding any inconvenience caused to the passengers or airline hostesses as a result of him praying there. Is Hussein's prayer valid? Where else on the plane can he pray?

4. A family of 6 people booked an Airbnb cottage for two nights. The property is restricted to 10 guests only. Based on the ruling of "having permission to use a place for prayer," can 5 extra guests also come to their place and offer their prayers together with the rest of this family? Do they need to seek permission from the owner of the house?

PRAYER CLOTHES

There are certain conditions that must be met with regards to the clothes a person wears when reciting one's prayers in order for their prayers to be correct.

Ṭahārah

The condition of *ṭahārah* means that the clothes and body of a person offering prayers must be free from any impurities *(najāsah)*. The prayer is invalid if one intentionally ignores a *najāsah* that is on one's clothing or body, or is willfully negligent.

There are certain exceptions which allow a prayer to be valid even if the body or dress are *najis* with blood on them:

- If the blood is from a wound on our own body, then we can pray as long as the wound or the sore has not yet healed. If it is possible to clean the wound and stop it from bleeding, then we should do this before praying.
- If the blood is from a wound on our body that has healed or from an external source that is not *najis*, and it has not been mixed with another substance or diluted, then it is permissible to pray in that clothing as long as it covers an area which is less than the size of the last part of the thumb (from the tip of the thumb to the first crease).
- If the blood is on a small piece of clothing that would not be big enough to cover the private parts (like socks or a cap), then it is permissible to wear that clothing even though it has some *najāsah* on it.

Clothing Must be Permissible (Mubāḥ)

One must own or have the permission to use a particular item of clothing in order to be able to recite one's prayers in them. Praying in usurped clothing intentionally or on account of negligence will make one's prayer void. This also means that a person cannot pray in a stolen shirt or a shirt bought with stolen money.

Rules of Leather and Fur

Wearing clothing made from the skin or hide of an animal that has not been slaughtered Islamically, or an animal whose meat is forbidden *(ḥarām)* to eat in the first place, is not allowed.

According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, if a person doubts whether some clothing has been made from an animal whose meat is lawful or unlawful to eat—irrespective of whether it was made in an Islamic country or not—then it is permitted to perform prayers in that.

A person's clothing should not have any hair, sweat, saliva, etc., of an animal whose meat is impermissible *(ḥarām)* to eat.

When it comes to cats, although cat hair is *ṭāhir*, praying in a clothing that has cat hair on it is impermissible. However, our *marājiʿ* disagree on how many cat hairs would void the prayers. The majority of our *marājiʿ*, including Āyatullāh Khamenei, have the opinion that even one cat hair will void the *ṣalāh*. Āyatullāh Sīstānī's ruling however, states that one, two, or up to three cat hairs is okay and will not void the *ṣalāh*. Further to this, according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, it is permissible to have even more than several hairs on a small item of clothing like socks. For all of the *marājiʿ*, this ruling applies to someone who knows about the presence of the hair on one's clothing. Thus, their responsibility is to remove the hair before they begin to pray their *ṣalāh*. However, if someone is not aware of it and finds out later, then they do not have to recite their prayer again.

Rules of Gold and Silk

Wearing gold and silk is permissible for women, however it is forbidden *(ḥarām)* for men to wear gold or pure silk,[8] whether it touches the skin or not. Any prayer recited by a man wearing either of these two items is void. Notably, these things are *ḥarām* for men to wear even outside of prayer.

8 According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, this prohibition does not apply to small items, such as ties, that are not large enough to be considered clothing on their own. According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, this prohibition applies to all items of clothing including small items.

Activity 3.1f: Scenario-Based Discussions

1. Ahmad bought a pair of shoes for his new job. He is not sure if the shoes are made from real or synthetic leather. He has no way of finding this out. Are his shoes *najis*? If he is doing *wuḍūʾ* and then places his wet feet on the shoes does this make his feet *najis*?

2. Asad bought a leather belt. He is fairly sure that it is real leather, and notices that it is made in China. According to the ruling of Āyatullāh Sīstānī, can he wear this belt while praying?

3. Sarah was staying over at her cousin's house. She needed to wake up early and leave for work right after *Fajr*. She borrowed her cousin's prayer clothing (even though she was not sure if her cousin would be okay with it), and prayed in it without asking for her permission because her cousin was still fast asleep. She later informed her cousin about it via a text message and her cousin said it was okay with her. Is Sarah's prayer valid or not?

4. Abbas wears a 22kt real gold chain. Can he pray in this? Is it permissible for him to wear this at any time?

3.2 Further Rules of Prayers

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn how to complete the special prayers accurately.
- Apply the rules of praying when traveling.
- Explain the significance of each prayer.

SPECIAL PRAYERS AND A TRAVELER'S PRAYER

In previous years, we learned how to perform the obligatory daily prayers. Now we will learn how to pray some of the special prayers which are slightly different in their format. We will also look at some special situations related to the prayers and their rules.

For each section of this lesson, your teacher will provide a practical demonstration in addition to reviewing the rules.

THE JUMUʿAH (FRIDAY) PRAYER

It is highly recommended that on Fridays, Muslims gather as a community and recite the Friday Prayer—*Ṣalātul Jumuʿah*. In fact, according to some *marājiʿ*, if there is a Friday prayer occurring in your local vicinity, then it is obligatory to attend. Other *marājiʿ*, including Āyatullāh Sīstānī and Āyatullāh Khamenei, have a ruling that during the *ghaybah* of the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, it is an alternative obligation. This means that it is permissible for a person to pray either the regular *Ẓuhr* prayer or the *Jumuʿah* prayer. This obligation is mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

"O you who believe, when the call is made for prayer on the day of Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off trading; that is better for you, if you know." [1]

There are some important differences between a regular *Ẓuhr* prayer and the Friday Prayer *(Ṣalātul Jumuʿah)*, and these include:

- *Ṣalātul Jumuʿah* is **preceded by two sermons** given by the leader *(imām)* of the prayers. After *adhān*, the *imām* delivers two sermons and after these two sermons, the actual prayer begins. The two sermons are considered part of the *ṣalāh,* so it is obligatory to listen to these sermons for those who are present and able to understand them. Furthermore, it is disliked *(makrūh)* to speak or make any noises during the sermons according to the ruling of Āyatullāh Sīstānī; and it is an obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)* to avoid talking during the sermons according to the ruling of Āyatullāh Khamenei. If speaking or making noise prevents others from listening to the sermons, then based on obligatory precaution it is not permitted.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Jumuʿah (62), Verse 9.

- The *Jumuʿah* Prayer is only **two *rakaʿāt*** (unlike the 4 *rakaʿāt* for the *Ẓuhr* prayer).
- In *Ṣalātul Jumuʿah*, the recitation of the two *sūrahs* in both of the *rakaʿāt* is done **out loud** (unlike in the *Ẓuhr* prayer when they must be recited in an audible whisper).
- In the Friday Prayer, there are **two recommended *qunūt*** instead of one. The first *qunūt* is just before the *rukūʿ* of the first *rakʿah,* while the second *qunūt* is just **after** the *rukūʿ* of the second *rakʿah*.
- The *Jumuʿah* Prayer must be performed in congregation. The minimum requirement is for at least five *bāligh*[2] males to take part in the *Jumuʿah* Prayer (including the *imām*).

STOP AND REFLECT: Is there any special memory you have about attending a *Jumuʿah* Prayer? Which part do you remember the most? What do you think is the most significant part of attending *Ṣalātul Jumuʿah*?

ṢALĀTUL EID (THE EID PRAYER)

This is a prayer that we recite on the days of *Eidul Aḍḥā* and *Eidul Fiṭr.* It is obligatory to perform this prayer if there is an immaculate Imām who is **not** in occultation. However, during the period of occultation, we recite this prayer with the intention of getting some reward. This prayer can be done individually or in congregation.

Method of performing Ṣalātul Eid

This prayer consists of two *rakaʿāt*. The unique thing about it is that it contains nine *qunūt*.

In the first *rakʿah*, we recite:

- Sūrah al-Fātiḥah
- Sūrah ash-Shams, or Sūrah al-Aʿlā, or any other *sūrah*
- 5 times *qunūt* is recited with a *takbīr* before each one, and one after the last *qunūt*. It is recommended that a special *duʿāʾ* is recited during this *qunūt* (which can be found in the certain books), but any *duʿāʾ* can be recited.

In the second *rakʾah*, we recite:

- Sūrah al-Fātiḥah
- Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah (if Sūrah ash-Shams was recited in the previous *rakʿāh*), or Sūrah ash-Shams (if Sūrah al-Aʿlā was recited in the previous *rakʿāh*), or any other *sūrah*
- 4 times *qunūt* is recited with a *takbīr* before each one, and one after the last *qunūt*. It is recommended that a special *duʿāʾ* is recited during this *qunūt* (which can be found in the certain books), but any *duʿāʾ* can be recited.

The other parts of this prayer are the same as our daily prayer.

2 A person who has reached maturity, puberty, or adulthood and has full responsibility under Islamic law.

NOTE: Although this method of offering the Eid prayer is according to the standard rulings of the *marājiʿ*, according to Āyatullāh Sīstānī's ruling, in the first *rakʿah*, *qunūt* should be recited four times, and in the second *rakʿah*, *qunūt* should be recited three times. When the prayer is being recited with the intention of getting some reward, it is permissible for followers of Āyatullāh Sīstānī to offer this prayer in the other way mentioned above which is the way that is standard according to the other *marājiʿ*.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think it is encouraged to start our days of celebration with a special *ṣalāh*? What do you enjoy most about attending *Ṣalātul Eid* with your family?

ṢALĀTUL LAYL (THE NIGHT PRAYER)

Ṣalātul Layl is a special, recommended Night Prayer. It is mentioned several times in the Noble Qurʾān and in many *aḥādīth*.

We can pray it any time from midnight until dawn.[3] However, the closer to dawn time that we recite it, the more rewarding and special it is. This prayer is extremely beneficial, and the final Prophet ﷺ and 12 Imāms ﷺ never missed it. It is an opportunity to have our prayers answered, our sins forgiven, our sustenance increased, to speak privately with Allah ﷻ, to remember our shortcomings and ask for forgiveness, and so much more.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: *"Any man or woman who rises for the Night Prayer immediately becomes the leader of nine rows of angels who stand behind them. Then Allah says: 'Now do you know why I created human beings?' The length of each row of angels is from the far East to the far West…"* [4]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

"Never miss Ṣalātul Layl, because in fact, the real loser is the one who misses Ṣalātul Layl." [5]

Ṣalātul Layl consists of 11 *rakaʿāt*. However, even praying one or three *rakaʿāt* out of the 11 is very rewarding. In this lesson, we will learn how to perform the last three *rakaʿāt* of this very beneficial *ṣalāh*. These are the most significant and rewarding prayers, and we should try to pray this *ṣalāh* whenever we are able to. The best time to pray *Ṣalātul Layl* is just before *Fajr*. The first eight *rakaʿāt* should be prayed in four sets of two *rakaʿāt* each just like we pray our *Fajr ṣalāh.*

3 According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī's ruling, even though it is better to recite the Night Prayer during this time period, it is also permissible to recite it earlier in the night after completing the *ʿIshāʾ* prayer.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 87, P. 137.
5 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 87, P. 146.

Then the other three *rakaʿāt* are to be recited as follows:

- Two *rakaʿāt* prayer—or *Ṣalātul Shafʿ*, which means 'appending something to someone else'—is performed like a normal *Fajr* prayer. It is recommended that after Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, we recite Sūrah an-Nās in the first *rakʿah* and Sūrah al-Falaq in the second *rakʿah*. According to most *marājiʿ*, including Āyatullāh Sīstānī, this prayer **should not** include a *qunūt* in it. We then end this prayer like a normal prayer with *tashahhud* and *taslīm*.
- The final *rakʿah* is the most special of them all. It is a one *rakʿah* prayer—called *Ṣalātul Witr*, which means 'odd' and is performed in the following way:
  - ▹ Recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah once
  - ▹ Then recite Sūrah al-Ikhlās once (and better yet, three times)
  - ▹ Optionally, recite Sūrah al-Falaq once
  - ▹ Optionally, recite Sūrah an-Nās once
  - ▹ Raise your hands in *qunūt*, and try to prolong it as much as possible. This is the most special and rewarding part of the entire 11 *rakaʿāt* prayer. In this *qunūt*, one should:
    - Seek forgiveness for 40 believers that you know and pray for them (they can be alive or deceased). For each of them, say *"Allāhummaghfir li"* (O Allah, forgive…) and say the name of the person (or some other way you refer to them, like "my mom" or "my dad").
    - Ask for forgiveness from Allah by saying *"Astaghfirullāha Rabbī wa atūbu ilayh"* (I ask forgiveness from Allah, my Lord, and I repent to Him) 70 times.
    - Recite *"Al-Afw"* (Forgive or pardon) 300 times.
  - ▹ Then perform *rukūʿ*, *sujūd*, *tashahhud,* and *taslīm* as normal to end the prayer.

This prayer is very special and a great opportunity for increasing one's spirituality and attaining closeness to Allah ﷻ. Its multiple benefits are immense, and it should not be ignored or underestimated.

Below is a supplemental video regarding *Ṣalātul Layl* explaining it with some visuals and in a bit more detail.

https://www.al-islam.org/kids-corner/how-pray-salat-al-layl

Activity 3.2a: My 'Forgive Me' List

Our goal for this lesson is to learn more about, and if possible, apply these lessons into our daily lives. Above, you learned about the importance of *Ṣalātul Layl,* and how one of the most rewarding aspects of it is the final *qunūt*. Below, come up with a list of 40 believers whom you would ask forgiveness for when you are able to recite this *ṣalāh*.

1.	21.
2.	22.
3.	23.
4.	24.
5.	25.
6.	26.
7.	27.
8.	28.
9.	29.
10.	30.
11.	31.
12.	32.
13.	33.
14.	34.
15.	35.
16.	36.
17.	37.
18.	38.
19.	39.
20.	40.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS: THE TRAVELER'S PRAYER

Allah ﷻ in His abundant Mercy has set some special rules regarding prayers and fasting that make these obligations easier for us. One of these rules is that if we are traveling outside our hometown, and certain conditions are met, then we shorten the usual four *rakaʿāt* prayers to two *rakaʿāt* (known in Arabic as *qasr),* and also we are exempt from fasting (e.g. if we are traveling in the month of Ramaḍān). In fact, if we are on a journey that meets the below conditions, then we are not allowed to pray in the full form, nor are we permitted to fast.

- We must be traveling a total of at least 27.5 miles or 44 kms from the border of our hometown (13.75 miles or 22 kms each way from the border of our city).
- We must not be traveling for a forbidden *(ḥarām)* purpose.
- We must not have the intention of staying in our destination, or its nearby surroundings, for more than 10 days.
- We must not be traveling through another town that is our hometown.
- We must not be frequent travelers, or be in a profession that requires one to travel frequently.

Activity 3.2b: Scenario-Based Discussions

Let us look at some examples of this rule:

1. Ali is traveling from New York to London. He plans to stay there for two weeks with his cousins. Should he shorten his prayers or pray in full?

2. Sarah is going to visit her friend's house on the other side of Los Angeles. The journey is 18.5 miles/30 kms each way, but she will not be leaving the borders of her city. Should she shorten her prayers or pray in full?

3. Ahmad lives in Sydney with his parents but travels to Newcastle (90 miles/145 kms away) three times a week for his studies. Should he shorten his prayers while he is in Newcastle?

4. Zahra is going on a short holiday with her family. They have travelled 43 miles/70 kms from the border of their hometown. They will be staying at the holiday house for one week. Should they shorten their prayers or pray in full?

SPECIAL SITUATIONS: PRAYING ON AN AIRPLANE

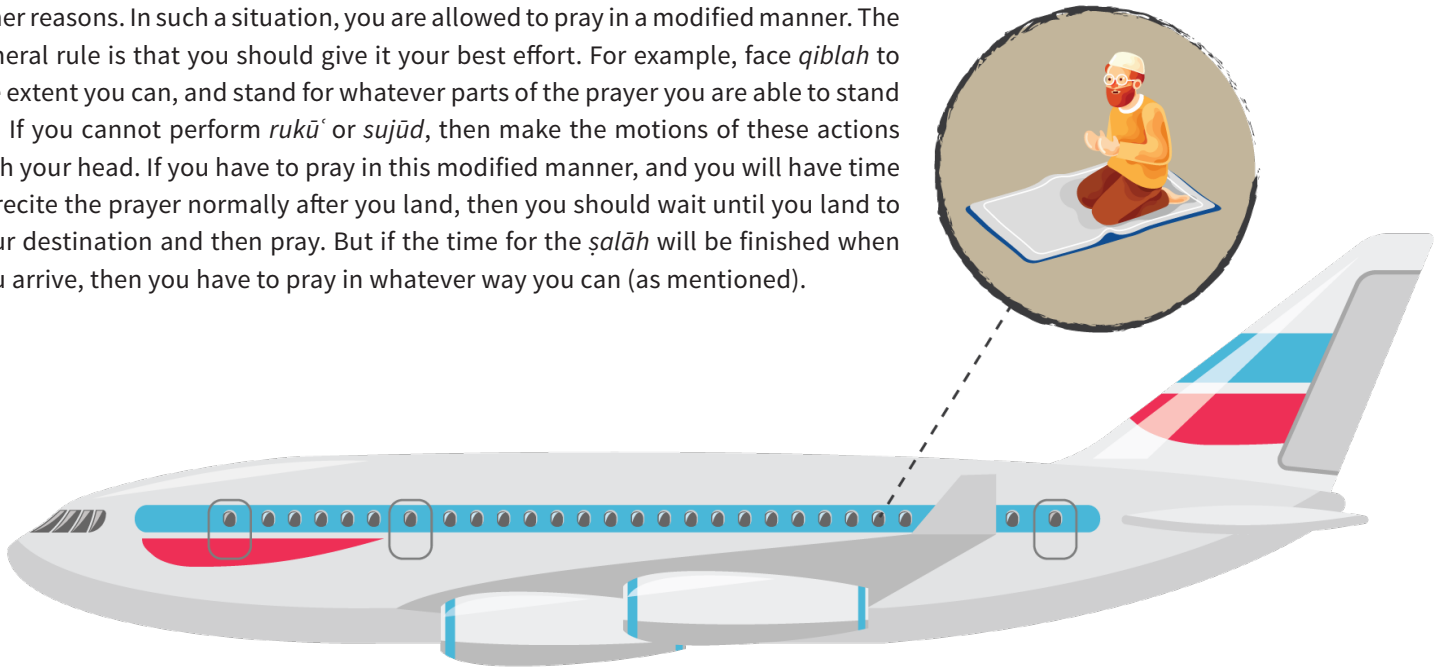
If we are undertaking a long plane journey, often the entire time-period of a particular *ṣalāh* occurs while we are on the airplane. In such cases, we still need to pray our *ṣalāh* within its designated time. We have two options for praying on the airplane:

- Whenever possible, we can obtain permission from the staff and pray in an appropriate area which will not block the path of other passengers or the crew members.
- When the previous option is not possible, then we can pray in the area of our allocated seat. We can do this by standing up and facing the *qiblah* and reciting the *sūrahs*. For *rukūʿ* and *sujūd,* we can make the action of bowing our head to indicate *rukūʿ* and *sujūd*. We can sit on our seats for *tashahhud* and *taslīm*. During this time, we should try to face the *qiblah* to the best of our ability. Your teacher will now demonstrate how to pray in this way in a practical manner.

Use the App HalalTrip.com to determine prayer times during the flight and the qiblah direction

Here are a few other important points to remember when we are praying while on an airplane:

- When flying, due to changing time-zones, it is good to research beforehand when the prayer times will occur during the flight. **Halaltrip.com** offers an app that can be used to determine these calculations, as well as the *qiblah* direction during the flight.
- Communicate with the flight attendants beforehand to ask them where you can offer your *ṣalāh*. They will usually be glad to help, and they will tell you where you can pray and when would be a good time to pray. For example, they may tell you to wait until after the meal service is done.
- There may be some cases where you cannot pray in a special area on the plane—either because the plane is too small, or due to an increase in turbulence, or for other reasons. In such a situation, you are allowed to pray in a modified manner. The general rule is that you should give it your best effort. For example, face *qiblah* to the extent you can, and stand for whatever parts of the prayer you are able to stand for. If you cannot perform *rukūʿ* or *sujūd*, then make the motions of these actions with your head. If you have to pray in this modified manner, and you will have time to recite the prayer normally after you land, then you should wait until you land to your destination and then pray. But if the time for the *ṣalāh* will be finished when you arrive, then you have to pray in whatever way you can (as mentioned).



Activity 3.2c: Review Questions

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. *Ṣalātul Jumuʿah* (the Friday Prayer) is:
   - **a.** Followed by 2 sermons
   - **b.** Preceded by 1 sermon
   - **c.** 4 *rakaʿāt*
   - **d.** None of the above

2. *Ṣalātul Eid* is prayed on:
   - **a.** *Eidul Aḍḥā*
   - **b.** *Eidul Fiṭr*
   - **c.** *Eidul Ghadīr*
   - **d.** All of the above
   - **e.** Only a & b are correct

3. The unique aspect of *Ṣalātul Eid* is that:
   - **a.** It has 5 *rukūʿ*
   - **b.** It has 9 *qunūt*
   - **c.** It has 4 *rakaʿāt*
   - **d.** None of the above

4. We are allowed to recite a shortened prayer *(qasr ṣalāh)* if:
   - **a.** We are traveling for less than 10 days
   - **b.** We travel frequently for work or school
   - **c.** We are traveling to our hometown

5. You can pray in a modified manner on an airplane:
   - **a.** Even if you will land with ample time left to pray at your destination
   - **b.** If the entire time-period of a particular *ṣalāh* occurs while we are on the airplane
   - **c.** If there is too much turbulence to pray standing up
   - **d.** b & c

TRUE OR FALSE

Identify whether the following statements are true or false. If they are false, then write the correct statement in the lines below.

1. *Ṣalātul Jumuʿah* must be recite in congregation. **TRUE** **FALSE**

2. *Ṣalātul Jumuʿah* can replace *Ẓuhr* prayer. **TRUE** **FALSE**

3. The closer to dawn we pray *Ṣalātul Layl*, the less rewarding it is. **TRUE** **FALSE**

4. You must ask forgiveness for 40 living believers in the last *rakʿah* of *Ṣalātul Layl*. **TRUE** **FALSE**

5. Praying a shortened prayer *(qasr ṣalāh)* is recommended *(mustaḥab)* when traveling. **TRUE** **FALSE**

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Complete the following 3-way venn diagram for the rules of the three special prayers we learned about in this lesson. What are the instructions that are unique to a particular *ṣalāh,* and where do the guidelines for performing the prayers overlap?

Activity 3.2d: Partner/Group Skit

Create a skit demonstrating what it might look like to pray on an airplane.

In your skit, be sure to include:

- Ways to prepare beforehand to pray on your flight, if possible.
- How to pray with modifications in flight.

Are there any questions you or your group still have about praying on an airplane? If so, then write them below.

CHAPTER 4

Further Furūʿ ad-Dīn

4.1 Fasting

4.2 Charity: Islamic Economics

4.1 Fasting

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn the important and blessed characteristics of the month of Ramaḍān.
- Understand the important essence of fasting.
- Compare and contrast the difference between *kaffārah* and *fidyah*.
- Understand the different rules when one must fast, and when not to fast.
- Explain the invalidators of a fast.
- Go over the rules pertaining to moon-sighting, and explain why some Muslims may start/end fasting on different days.

THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

The month of Ramaḍān is a very sacred and special month in Islam. It is a month in which we have the honor of fasting for the sake of Allah ﷻ, and gaining the treasures of self-control, self-restraint, and God-consciousness *(taqwā)*.

Activity 4.1a: Group Discussion

The Noble Prophet ﷺ has given us the gift of a special sermon in which he explains the greatness of the month of Ramaḍān, and the rewards of the actions we offer in that month. Split into groups of three. Read the following sermon, then discuss the below questions:

Sermon Given by the Prophet ﷺ on the Last Friday of Shaʾbān welcoming the Reception of the Month of Ramaḍān [1]

"O People ! Indeed ahead of you is the blessed month of Allah. A month of blessing, mercy, and forgiveness. A month which with Allah is the best of months. Its days are the best of days, its nights are the best of nights, and its hours are the best of hours. It is a month which invites you to be the guests of Allah, and invites you to be one of those near Him. Each breath you take is a glorification of Him; your sleep is worship; your deeds are accepted; and your supplications are answered.

So, ask Allah, your Lord, to give you a sound body and an enlightened heart so you may be able to fast and recite His Book, for only the one will be unhappy who is devoid of Allah's forgiveness during this great month. Remember the hunger and thirst of the Day of Judgment (Yaumul Qiyāmah) with your hunger and thirst (while you are fasting); give alms to the needy and the poor; honor your old; show kindness to the young ones; maintain ties with your blood relations; guard your tongues; close your eyes to that which is not permissible for your sight; close your ears to that which is forbidden to hear; show compassion to the orphans of other people so that compassion may be shown to your orphans.

Repent to Allah for your sins, and raise your hands in supplications (duʿāʾ) during these times, for they are the best of times, and Allah looks toward His creatures with kindness, replying to them during the hours, and granting their needs if He is asked.

O People! Indeed your souls are dependant on your deeds, so free it with repentance (istighfār); lighten its loads by long prostrations (sujūd); and know Allah swears by His Might that: There is no punishment for the one who prays and prostates, and they shall have no fear of the fire on the Day when human beings will stand before the Lord of the worlds.

1 Retrieved on March 6, 2022, from: https://www.al-islam.org/supplications-month-ramadhan/sermon-given-prophet-s-last-friday-shaban-reception-month-ramadhan

O People! The person who breaks the fast (gives iftār) to a fasting person during this month will be like one who has freed someone, and their past sins will be forgiven."

Some of the people who were there with the Prophet ﷺ, then asked him: *"Not all of us are able to feed those who are fasting."*

The Prophet ﷺ replied: *"Allah gives this reward even if the meal (iftār) is a drink of water."*

Then he continued: *"The person who has good morals (akhlāq) during this month will be able to pass the bridge (Ṣirāṭ) on that Day when feet will slip.*

One who covers the faults of others will benefit in that Allah will curb His anger on the Day of Judgment.

As for the one who honors an orphan, Allah will honor them on the Day of Judgment; and as for the one who spreads kindness, Allah will spread His Mercy over them on the Day of Judgment.

As for the one who cuts the ties of relations, Allah will cut His Mercy from them.

Whosoever performs a recommended prayer (mustaḥab ṣalāh) in this month, Allah will keep the fire of Hell away from them.

Whoever performs an obligatory prayer (wājib ṣalāh), Allah will reward them with 70 prayers [worth] in this month; and whosoever prays a lot during this month will have their load lightened on the Day of Measure.

The person who recites one verse of the Noble Qurʾān will be given the rewards of reciting the entire Qurʾān during other months.

O People! Indeed during this month, the doors of heaven are open, therefore ask Allah not to close them for you; and the doors of Hell are closed, so ask Allah to keep them closed for you.

During this month Shayṭān (Satan) is imprisoned, so ask your Lord not to let him have power over you."

1. What are three of the many special characteristics of the month of Ramaḍān that are mentioned in this sermon of the Prophet ﷺ?

2. In the second paragraph, the Prophet ﷺ mentions several important actions besides fasting in the month of Ramaḍān. List three of them.

3. Toward the end of this sermon, the Prophet ﷺ lists a number of actions for which there is a special reward in this sacred month. Write down three of these actions and their corresponding reward.

4. How do you explain the fact that these actions have special rewards in the month of Ramaḍān compared to other times?

5. Are the actions listed of a spiritual or social nature, or both? Defend your answer.

As we reflect on these actions, we understand that Allah ﷻ has given us many paths and avenues to work toward reaching our perfection and gaining closeness to Him ﷻ during this sacred month.

FASTING IN THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

> "O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon those before you, so that you may achieve God-consciousness (*taqwā*)." [2]

Allah ﷻ has made fasting obligatory upon us during the month of Ramaḍān. During this month from dawn to shortly after sunset, we must abstain from eating, drinking, and certain other things in order to gain proximity to the Almighty One. The act of fasting is highly rewarding and has many spiritual benefits. The narrations below explain some of these spiritual benefits of fasting:

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"All of the actions of a human being are for themselves, except fasting. It is for Me, and I Myself will give its reward."* [3]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said: *"The sleep of a fasting person is worship. Their silence is glorification of Allah. Their actions are accepted, and their supplications are answered."* [4]

"If by fasting a person holds themselves back from food which they crave, Allah will make it incumbent upon Himself to give that person from the food and drink of Paradise." [5]

FASTING OF ALL THE BODY PARTS

What does "fasting of all the body parts mean?" How do our ears, eyes, and tongue fast? The following *ḥadīth* will help us to answer this question.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said:

> "When you fast, let your hearing and vision abstain with you from anything unlawful, against everything ugly, and leave hypocrisy aside, and do not harm those who serve you. Rather, adorn yourself with the dignity of the fast; and do not make your fasting day be the same as the day when you are not fasting." [6]

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 183.
3 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mizān al-Ḥikmah*, No. 10911.
4 *Mizān al-Ḥikmah*, No. 10930.
5 Allāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 93, P. 331.
6 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 94, P. 351.

Activity 4.1b: Review

Answer the following review questions. The answers are provided on the next page.

1. List three situations when a person is exempt from fasting.

2. What should a person do if they:

   a. Missed or invalidated their fast deliberately?

   b. Missed a fast due to a valid excuse?

PEOPLE WHO ARE EXEMPT FROM FASTING

In certain situations, people are exempt from fasting, these include:

- A pregnant woman who is approaching the time of her delivery, if fasting is harmful for her or her unborn child.
- A woman who is nursing her infant from her own milk if fasting will affect her supply of milk in a way that is harmful to her child.
- A person who finds it impossible or excessively difficult to fast due to old age.
- Someone who has a condition in which fasting would significantly harm their health by making them sick or causing harm to their body.
    - ▹ One of the ways of knowing whether fasting is harmful for a person's health is if it is confirmed by a qualified health professional and the person is satisfied by this opinion.
- A traveler who is traveling out of town a minimum of a certain distance (approximately 27.5 miles/44 km roundtrip) from the border of their hometown, when other conditions are also met.

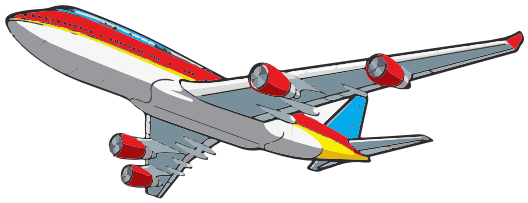
FASTING AND TRAVEL

When a person is traveling, under certain conditions, they are not allowed to fast; and if they are fasting then they must break their fast. We must also shorten our 4 *rakaʿāt* prayers to 2 *rakaʿāt* in this situation (shortened prayers are referred to as *qaṣr*). There are three major conditions for shortening our prayers and breaking our fast during travel:

1. **We are outside of our hometown.**
   For example, if I went on holiday for one week to City B and am now traveling back to City A which is my hometown. During this journey, I would not be able to fast, and I have to shorten my prayers during this trip (assuming it meets the required distance), but when I arrive back home to City A, then I would have to fast and pray full.
2. **We should not be staying at the place we are traveling to for more than 10 days.**
   For example, if I live in London but am traveling to Los Angeles to stay for two weeks, I do not need to shorten my prayers in Los Angeles as long as I am not traveling outside of the greater Los Angeles area during my stay there. I would however, shorten my prayers during the journey between the two cities.
3. **We should be traveling a return distance of more than 27.5 miles/44 kms**
   For example, if I am leaving my town for 5 days, but going somewhere that is only 6.2 miles/10 kms away from the border of my hometown, then I would not shorten my prayers, and I would have to fast.

There are some other conditions that need to be met before a person can shorten their prayers and not be able to fast:

- One must **intend** to travel more than the 27.5 miles/44 kms round trip (or half of that in the one way trip) **before** the journey, and should not change their mind on the way.
- Neither the purpose of traveling, nor the trip itself should not be for anything forbidden *(ḥarām)*. Examples may include:
    - ▹ If the parents are unhappy or displeased about a trip that is not obligatory for the child to go on, then it is *ḥarām* for them to go.
    - ▹ If a person is traveling with the sole intent to avoid an obligatory act (like escaping from creditors), or to commit a sin (like traveling to gamble in another city), then they must recite the prayers in full and observe the obligatory fasts.
- The person should not be a nomad.
- A person should not be a regular traveler. For example, if someone lives in City A and travels frequently to City B for work, then they cannot shorten their prayers, nor break their fast in either city (meaning that they would still have to fast as they would not be considered a frequent traveler). The definition of a frequent traveler varies according to the different *marājiʿ*.
- A person must leave the borders of one's hometown. For example, if someone travels more than 27.5 miles/44 kms from one suburb of a large city (e.g. Sydney) to another part of that city without leaving its borders, then they would not shorten their prayers, and would have to fast.



FASTING AND SICKNESS

The laws that Allah ﷻ sets for us are merciful laws. They are not meant to cause us intolerable difficulty or harm. Therefore, there are exemptions from fasting if someone is sick:

- If a person knows or has a reasonable fear that they will get sick or be harmed by fasting, then they must not fast; and if they do still fast, then it will not be valid.
- If someone is sick and they know or they have a reasonable fear that fasting will:
  - ▷ Make them more sick
  - ▷ Increase their pain
  - ▷ Delay their recovery

Then they should not fast, and if they still do fast, then their fast will not be valid.

Some other points include:

- If a person is sick, but fasting is not harmful to their health, then their fast will be valid.
- Sickness does not include normally acceptable/bearable levels of hunger, thirst, weariness, headaches, or other difficulties that go away within a couple of hours after breaking the fast *(ifṭār)*. Such things are normally considered tolerable by rational people.
- A doctor's opinion can be the source of fear of harm or sickness, however if a person is certain that fasting will not cause them any harm despite what the doctor says, then they must fast.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why are these laws referred to as merciful? How does this connect to Allah ﷻ being a Merciful Lord?

MISSED FASTS

If a person misses a fast due to a **valid reason**, such as illness, menstruation, pregnancy, travel, etc., then they need to make up those fasts. Making up a missed fast is done with the intention of *qaḍāʾ*. In some cases, in addition to the *qaḍāʾ* (for example, in the case of pregnancy, or if a person did not keep the *qaḍā* before the next month of Ramaḍān), one must also pay a certain amount as a compensation—which is referred to in Arabic as *fidyah*—and it involves feeding a poor believer 750g of staple food (such as wheat, barley, rice, etc.) for each day that was missed.

If someone misses a fast **without a valid reason**, they must make up that fast and offer a type of penalty—which is referred to in Arabic as *kaffārah*—and we will learn about that later.

FIDYAH AND KAFFĀRAH

Fidyah and *kaffārah* are two obligations that may need to be given in relation to missed fasts.

Fidyah literally means "an alternative" and it refers to a charitable tax or a compensation that applies to a person who is excused from fasting due to: (a) long-term illnesses, (b) difficulties relating to old age, (c) pregnancy (when there is fear of harm to the child), or (d) nursing (when the mother fears low milk supply). Such a person is not obligated to fast. However, they must pay *fidyah* for each day as an alternative to the fast that was missed.

If the fasts were missed due to pregnancy or nursing a child, then the woman also needs to make up the fast later on, as well as paying the *fidyah*. If the fasts were not able to be kept due to a long-term illness that lasted throughout the year until the next month of Ramaḍān, then they do not need to be made up, and only the *fidyah* needs to be given. If the fasts were missed due to difficulties related to old age, then according to Āyatullāh Khamenei, it is an obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)* for them to be made up in the future if the difficulties go away and that person is able to fast. According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, in such a scenario it is a recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* to make up the fasts.

IN THE CASE OF	FIDYAH NEEDS TO BE GIVEN?	DOES A PERSON NEED TO MAKE UP THE FAST?	SUMMARY
1. Long-term illnesses	Yes	If the illness lasted throughout the year until the next month of Ramaḍān, then one does not have to make up the missed fasts.	Need to pay *fidyah*, and also fast if one is better by the following year.
2. Difficulties relating to old age	Yes	According to Āyatullāh Khamenei, it is an obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)* for them to be made up in the future if the difficulties go away and that person is able to fast. According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī, in such a scenario, it is a recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* to make up the fasts.	Need to pay *fidyah*, and if in the future one feels better, then should make up the fasts.
3. Pregnancy (when there is fear of harm to the mother or child)	Yes	A lady must make up the fasts as soon as one is able to.	Need to pay *fidyah*, and pay back the fasts as soon as possible.
4. Nursing (when the mother fears low milk supply for the baby)	Yes	A lady must make up the fasts as soon as one is able to.	Need to pay *fidyah*, and pay back the fasts as soon as possible.

The *fidyah* amount is 750 grams (0.75 kilos or 1.65 lbs) of food that must be given to a poor believer for each fast missed. You can either give the actual food, or pay the cash equivalent to the person or a trustable source who will use that money to buy the proper amount of food and give it to a needy believer. For the cash equivalent value, you should check with your local scholar.

Kaffārah is a type of "religious penalty." There are two types of *kaffārah* that are related to fasting:

1. *Kaffārah* of delay. A person missed some fasts (for example, due to travel or a short-term illness) and they have to make these up, but they do not offer these fasts before the next month of Ramaḍān. If one was able to fast but did not make them up before the following month of Ramaḍān, then they must do *istighfār* and give a *kaffārah* of delay for each of these fasts. They also need to make up the fast at some time in the future. The amount needed to be given is the same as the *fidyah* amount described above. This *kaffārah* is a one-time payment that only has to be given after the first year of delay, it will not have to be given again if they delay making up the fast(s) for the second or subsequent years.
2. *Kaffārah* for deliberately breaking a fast without a valid reason. For example, if someone decides that they do not want to fast one day during the month of Ramaḍān so that they can attend a classmate's party and eat pizza, the person will have to pay a *kaffārah* for missing that fast.

If a person purposely misses a fast (such as in the example given above), then they must ask for forgiveness (do *istighfār)* for not observing the command of Allah ﷻ, **and** make up for the missed fast(s), **and** also give a *kaffārah*. In such cases, the *kaffārah* for each missed fast is keeping 60 fasts (out of which 31 days are consecutive) or feeding 60 poor people (more details can be found in the books of Islamic Laws).

Activity 4.1c: Review & Scenarios

Create a Venn Diagram to contrast the differences and similarities between *kaffārah* and *fidyah*. When you have completed your diagram, answer the following questions: What are the differences between *kaffārah* and *fidyah*? When do the amounts given for each differ? When are they the same?

KAFFĀRAH

FIDYAH

Read the following scenarios and determine whether the person must pay *fidyah*, *kaffārah* of delay, *kaffārah* for deliberately not fasting, or none of them. Defend your answer.

1. Abbas is 8 years old and is excited to keep his second fast today. He woke up for *suḥūr* with his family before school and told his mom not to pack him a lunch. However, at lunch time he could not stand how thirsty he was and decided to take a drink of water.

2. Leena just turned 9 years old and is so excited to be keeping her first full month of fasts after becoming *bālighah* (the age where she is now responsible and must fulfill her obligations according to Islamic Law). Unfortunately, on the 10th day of month of Ramaḍān, she comes down with a very high fever and cannot fast since she has to take medication and is quite sick.

3. Suroor is 14 years old and is very excited to go to her best friend's birthday party. It is in the month of Ramaḍān so she knows she will not be able to eat anything and assures her mother that she will observe her fast because it is compulsory *(wājib)* upon her. However, once she gets there, she becomes tempted and has a small slice of pizza.

MOON OF THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

The Lunar Calendar

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, meaning that it is based on the sighting of the moon. The first day of the Islamic month, as we have learned in previous years, is when the crescent moon is sighted. The length of the cycle of the moon from one crescent to the next is 29 or 30 days (depending on the sighting of the crescent).

Unlike the solar calendar, Islamic lunar dates have Islamic significance. For example, *Laylatul Qadr* is a night whose worship is better than a thousand months. This night is in reality an important night with special blessings from Allah ﷻ. Similarly, we should celebrate the days that our Ahlul Bayt ﷺ were born *(wilādat)*, and have *majālis* and grieve on the days of their martyrdom *(shahādah)*.

In the Islamic calendar, because the moon can only be seen at night, the night comes before the day. This means that an 'Islamic day' begins from the time of sunset on one day and finishes at the time of sunset the next day, unlike how we normally consider the day to begin and finish at midnight in the solar calendar.

Therefore, when we want to know whether the month of Ramaḍān—which is the 9th month of the Islamic calendar—has begun, we should go outside and look at the sky for the new, thin, crescent moon.

Differences in Regards to Moon-Sighting

Sometimes, Muslims may begin and/or finish fasting on different days. This is usually because they follow various sects in Islam, or refer to different *marājiʿ* who have slightly varying opinions on the rules for moon-sightiwng.

Even though there are some differences, this does not mean that anyone is wrong. Each scholar does their own research and gives a ruling according to their best ability, and the people who refer to that scholar are also doing their duty by following the relevant *marjaʿ*.

In cases like these, it is important to remember that although we may disagree on the dates, we should try to remain as united as possible. It is very important to respect one another, and not use these small differences as a reason to cause problems between Muslims.

Activity 4.1d: Charting

In previous years, we learned about those things which invalidate a fast. Review the rulings, and determine in the table below whether the fast is valid or invalid in each scenario. The completed table with answers is at the end of this lesson (page 233).

ACTION	ON PURPOSE	BY ACCIDENT
1. Eating or drinking		
2. Swallowing something stuck between your teeth		
3. Brushing your teeth		
4. Rinsing your mouth out with water		
5. Using inhalers		
6. Using eye drops or ear drops		
7. Throwing up		
8. Inhaling smoke		
9. Submerging your entire head underwater		
10. Swallowing thick dust		
11. Swallowing phlegm/mucus that comes up and enters into your mouth		
12. Attributing a lie to Allah ﷻ or the one of the 14 *Maʿṣūmīn* ﷺ		
13. Taking injections		

w

Here are the some of the rulings for different actions that vary according to *marāji'*:

ACTION	ĀYATULLĀH SĪSTĀNĪ	ĀYATULLĀH KHAMENEI	NOTES
11. Swallowing phlegm/ mucus that comes up and enters into your mouth.	It is okay to swallow it if it has not entered the cavity of the mouth. If it has entered the cavity of the mouth, then the recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* is not to swallow it.	It is okay to swallow it if it has not entered the cavity of the mouth. If it has entered the cavity of the mouth and one intentionally swallows it, then the fast is void.	In either case, if it is done unintentionally, then one's fast will not become invalidated.
12. Submerging your entire head underwater	It is severely discouraged *(makrūh)* and a recommended precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ mustaḥab)* to avoid this.	According to obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāṭ wājib)*, the fast will become void if a person intentionally submerges one's entire head under water when fasting.	• This rule does not apply to showering. • This rule applies to swimming, unless one can make sure that their entire head does not go under water at any one time. Therefore, swimming while fasting is not advisable.
13. Taking injections	Having injections and IV drips do not invalidate the fast.	The fast is valid if it is injected into the muscles and is for treatment or preventative purposes (not for nutrition). Intravenous injections (injected into the veins) that are for nutritional purposes will invalidate the fast.	

Activity 4.1e: Review Questions

1. The Islamic calendar is a:
   - **a.** Lunar calendar
   - **b.** Solar calendar
   - **c.** Gregorian calendar

2. The way to find out whether an Islamic month has begun is to:
   - **a.** See or become sure that the new crescent moon of that month has been sighted.
   - **b.** See or become sure that the full moon of that month has been sighted.
   - **c.** Look it up in an online or printed calendar.

3. The month of Ramaḍān is the:
   - **a.** The 7th month of the Islamic calendar
   - **b.** The 3rd month of the Islamic calendar
   - **c.** The 9th month of the Islamic calendar

Activity 4.1f: Lesson Extensions

Assign each main section to a group or pair of students. These students are now the 'experts' on that subtopic and will present a lesson to the class to explain those specific rulings. Students must make a mini-lesson, as well as an assessment.

Activity 4.1d: Answer Key

✗ FAST IS INVALID ✓ FAST IS VALID

ACTION	ON PURPOSE	BY ACCIDENT	NOTES
1. Eating or drinking	✗	✓	
2. Swallowing something stuck between your teeth	✗	✓	If you intentionally swallow any food particles that remain between the teeth, then your fast is invalid.
3. Brushing your teeth	✓	✓	You must be careful though not to swallow any external water, the toothpaste, or saliva that has been mixed with the toothpaste.
4. Rinsing your mouth out with water	✓	✓	You must not swallow any of the water deliberately.
5. Using inhalers	✓	✓	These go directly into the air pipe, thus they are allowed to be used.
6. Using eye drops or ear drops	✓	✓	It is not permissible to apply medicine, or to put water or any other substance through the nose if you know that the substance will reach the throat. If it reaches the throat, then the fast will be invalid. Āyatullāh Khamenei: It is discouraged *(makrūh)* to put any medicine through the nose (e.g. nasal sprays) when one is fasting.
7. Throwing up	✗	✓	Intentionally vomiting (for example, if someone has a queasy stomach and they make themselves cough in order to vomit) causes the fast to become invalid. Also, stomach acid or food that comes up when belching should not be swallowed intentionally.

ACTION	ON PURPOSE	BY ACCIDENT	NOTES
8. Inhaling smoke	✗	✓	Examples of thick smoke: • Smoke from cigarettes or tobacco • Smoke from a fire or from the exhaust of a truck Note: We are allowed to inhale steam, but if it condenses in the mouth and turns into water, then if you swallow it on purpose, your fast will become void.
9. Swallowing thick dust	✗	✓	If it is really thick and heavy like smoke from the exhaust of a truck and it reaches the throat, then it will break the fast. An example of thick dust is when sweeping a very dusty ground and the dust comes up in the air. If that dust reaches the throat, then one's fast will be broken. Allowing thin dust in the air to reach the throat will not invalidate the fast. If thick dust is whipped up by the wind, and a person notices it but is not careful to avoid it, then allowing that dust to reach one's throat will invalidate the fast based on obligatory precaution.
10. Attributing a lie to Allah ﷻ or one of the 14 *Maʿṣūmīn* ﷺ	✗	✓	If you want to quote a *ḥadīth* or a verse from the Qurʾān, then make sure you are accurate about it and give the reference. If you are not sure about it, then report it in such a way that it is not directly attributed to the Prophet ﷺ or the Imāms ﷺ. For example, you can say: "It has been narrated that…"

4.2 Charity: Islamic Economics

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the basics of the Islamic Economic System.
- Compare and contrast the Islamic System to the current Global Economic System.
- Understand and explain the connection of charity to Economic Systems and how they are supported in Islam.

Activity 4.2a: Pre-Reading Quick Write

Before reading this lesson, do a quick two minute write up about what comes to your mind when you think about the word economy or an economic system.

INTRODUCTION

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ...

"And the spoils that Allah gave to His Messenger from the people of the towns are for Allah, and the Messenger, and the relatives, and the orphans, and the needy, and the traveler, so that they do not circulate among the rich from among you..." [1]

In previous lessons, we discussed the importance of charity in Islam. We discussed that charity:

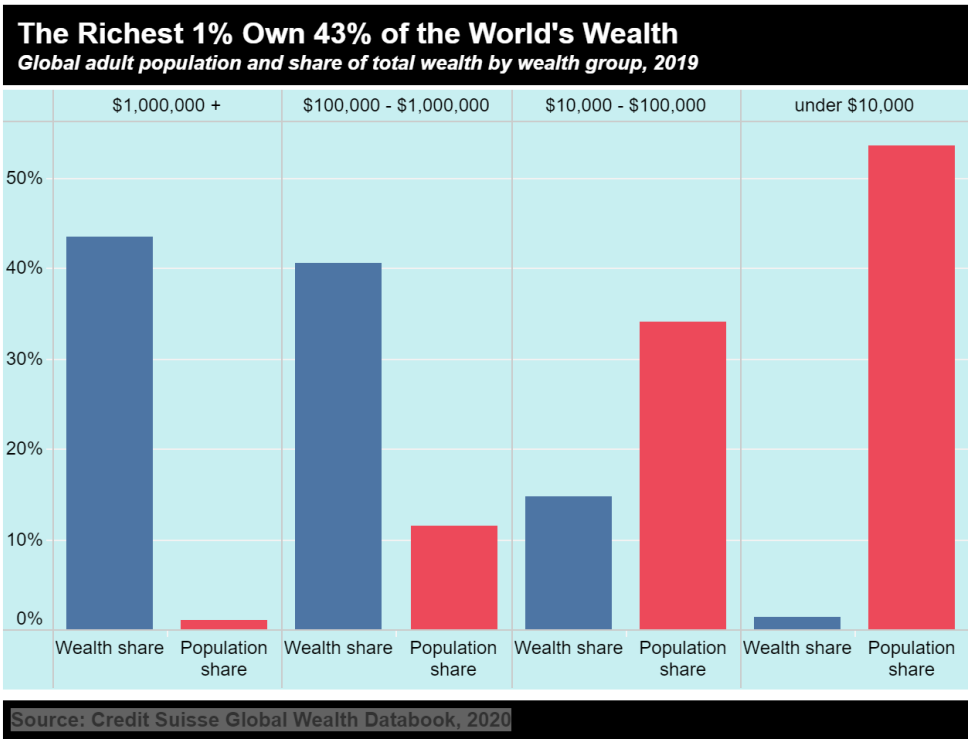
- Can take on many forms including: financial help, giving one's time, sharing one's skills, speaking kind words, bringing benefit to other people or repelling harm from them.
- Its financial forms fall into the categories of: *zakāh*, *khums*, *zakātul fiṭr*, and *ṣadaqah*.

In this lesson, we will look further into the importance of charity in Islam by looking at the Economic System that the Qurʾān puts in place. We will compare the Qurʾānic guidelines to the Economic System that prevails in the world today.

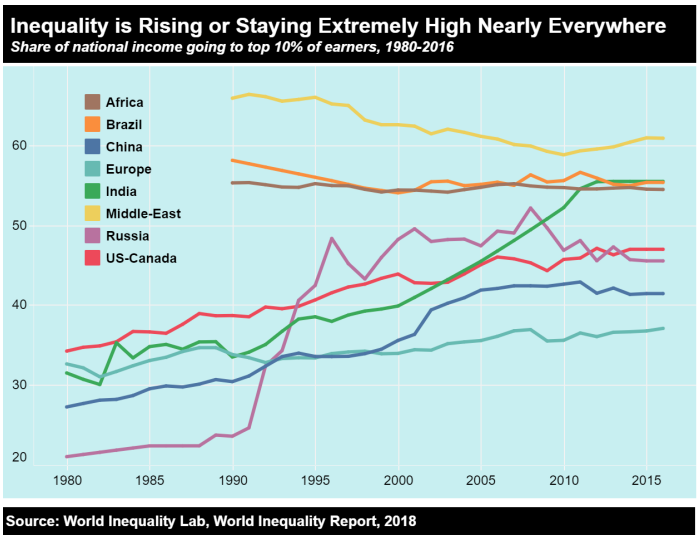
1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥashr (59), Verse 7.

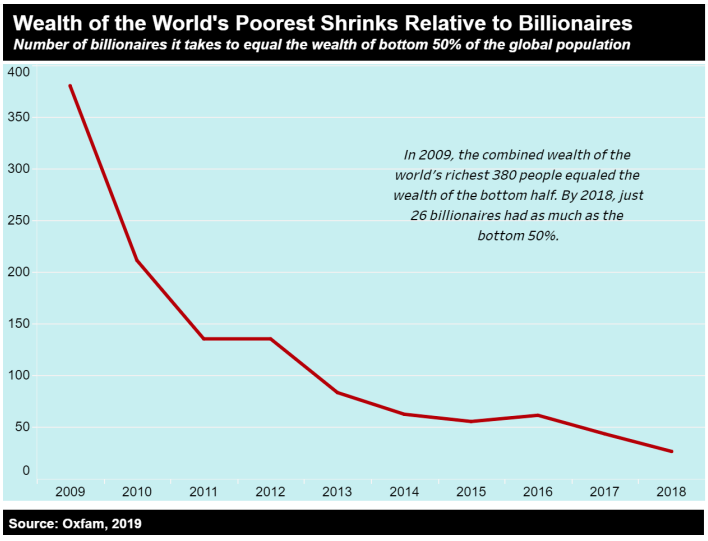
THE SYSTEM OF CAPITALISM AND CONSUMERISM

The richest 1% of the world's entire population own 43% of the world's wealth.[2]



53.6% percent of the world's population own just 1.4% percent of the global wealth—this means that more than half of the world is forced to share just 1% of the available global wealth.[3]





The world we live in today is a world of gross economic inequality. It is a world that runs according to the Economic System of Capitalism. This is a system that focuses on the needs of an individual, and places the needs of an individual before the needs of society. It also focuses on the value of capital. Capital is wealth that is invested at the start of a business venture, as opposed to labor which is the effort and skills of those who work in a business day-to-day.

2 https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/wealth-five-richest-men-doubles-2020-five-billion-people-made-poorer-decade-division
3 https://www.forbes.com/sites/qai/2021/11/30/countries-with-major-wealth-gaps-and-how-adopting-practices-like-investing-can-help/?sh=6c4c267d7a2b

The focus on individual interests and on the value of capital leads to the following consequences:

- The concentration of large amounts of wealth among a small minority:
  - A person who is wealthy has the ability to invest into more and more businesses simply by contributing money. This causes their wealth to grow even further.
  - When they invest, they often invest along with other wealthy people, and benefit companies owned by other rich individuals. This leads to a monopoly or circulation of wealth among a small elite minority.
- Economic Inequality:
  - In simple terms—because of the above—the rich get richer, while the poor get poorer.
  - A person who does not have any wealth to start off with cannot invest capital into a business. They usually earn money through labor (using their skills or physical effort). Since the Capitalist System values capital more than it does labor, wages are often low and do not enable a person to save money, thus they are not ever able to invest any capital. This means that they remain on low incomes.
- The concentration of power among a small minority:
  - Power is often linked to wealth. People with wealth can influence public opinion through the media, as well as influence the political system and governments through their donations.
  - This leads to the concentration of political and social power to be amongst a small minority.
- Exploitation and Imperialism:
  - Since the main goal of a Capitalist System is to make profits, and because power is concentrated among a small minority, this often leads to exploitation of poorer nations for profit.
  - We see many examples of countries who are very rich in terms of natural resources, but whose people live in extreme poverty. This is because the profits from these natural resources go to the wealthy owners of multi-national companies based in capitalist countries, while the local population is paid a very small wage for their labor without ever being given the opportunity to invest or improve their lives on a permanent basis.

STOP AND REFLECT: Based on the consequences of the Capitalistic Economy, discuss with a partner what conclusions you see in the real world today. Be prepared to discuss your findings with the class.

THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC SYSTEM

In order to avoid the above problems, Islam teaches the following economic principles:

True Ownership belongs to Allah ﷻ:

- When we understand that everything we have is not really ours, but is truly owned by Allah ﷻ, we are much more likely to be able to share it with others. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

"Yet to Allah belong the treasuries of the heavens and the earth…" [4]

Allah ﷻ has given us natural resources as a trust to human society:

- He has given us so many natural resources to make our life possible and comfortable on Earth.
- He has given these as a trust to **all** of humankind, **not** to a few individuals or companies.
- If we understand that these vast natural resources are a trust from Allah ﷻ to all of humanity, then we should consider limiting the ability of very large companies or wealthy individuals to own huge pieces of land or similar resources.

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً…

"Do you not see that Allah has disposed for you whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth, and He has showered upon you His blessings, (both) the outward and the inward..." [5]

Emphasis on Charity:

- We have learnt in previous lessons just how much emphasis the Noble Qurʾān places on charity.
- Giving charity is a means of redistribution of wealth from the well off people to the poor. Rather than the rich getting richer, they instead share their wealth with the poor and help them come out of poverty.
- Some charity is obligatory *(wājib)* to give when certain conditions are met. For example, at the end of the month of Ramaḍān, *zakātul fiṭr* must be given by the head of the household for all of the members in one's family. At the end of a year, *khums* must be paid by each individual on one's savings, and any unused items (even unused gifts according to some *marāji'*). This is a compulsory mechanism for sharing one's wealth. Beyond that, recommended charity also plays an important role in helping the poor.

Public or state wealth belongs to the needy:

- The verse below discusses possessions that went to the Prophet ﷺ at the time in which he was alive. In today's world, this would be considered state or public wealth, such as that which is extracted from the large farmlands, mines, oceans, and underground oil reservoirs, etc.
- The Qurʾān states that such public wealth belongs to the poor, the orphans, and the needy.
- The Qurʾān specifically states that the reason why it distributes such wealth to these groups is so that it does not "circulate among the rich." As we have seen, the circulation of wealth among the rich and their monopoly on most of the world's wealth is one of the major problems that we face in today's day and age. As mentioned in the verse quoted at the beginning of this lesson:

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ…

"And the spoils that Allah gave to His Messenger from the people of the towns are for Allah, and the Messenger, and the relatives, and the orphans, and the needy, and the traveler, so that they do not circulate among the rich from among you…" [6]

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn (63), Verse 7.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Luqmān (31), Verse 20.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥashr (59), Verse 7.

Fairness and justice:

- The Noble Qur'ān emphasizes justice and fairness in business dealings in many instances. The purpose of this is to avoid the exploitation of the poor by the rich. The story of Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ is a great example of this.[7]
- If this was to be applied in today's world, it would mean things such as better wages for workers, more benefits for them, as well as fairer trade deals between rich and poor countries.

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ۝ وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَو وَّزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ۝ أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُم مَّبْعُوثُونَ ۝ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

"Woe to the defrauders who use short measures, who when they measure [a commodity bought] from the people, take the full measure; but when they measure or weigh for others, they cause them loss. Do they not know that they will be resurrected on a tremendous Day, (the) Day when humankind will stand before the Lord of all the worlds?" [8]

An emphasis on social good:

- While Islam does not ignore the interests of an individual, it places the benefits of the society above the benefits of an individual.
- This is in direct contrast to Capitalism.
- Islam teaches us to direct our instinct of self-interest and self-love toward wanting good things in our life in the Hereafter. The path to doing this is through contributing positively to our society, and overcoming miserliness and greed. Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَاسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

"So be wary of Allah, as much as you can, and listen and obey, and spend [in the way of Allah]; that is better for yourselves. And whoever is protected from their own greed—it is they who will be the successful ones." [9]

Forbidding ribā (usury and unlawful interest):

- According to Islamic teachings, taking and giving *ribā* (usury and unlawful interest) is forbidden, to the extent that the Noble Qurʾān describes people who take interest as *"being deranged by the Devil's touch"* [10] and *"at war with Allah and His Messenger."* [11]

  Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"If usury (ribā) was permissible (halāl), then people would leave aside their commerce and manufacturing. Allah made usury (ribā) forbidden (harām) so that people would go from the forbidden (harām) to the permissible (halāl); get busy with transactions, buying, and selling; and loan out their extra earnings [without charging interest]."* [12]

  Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said: *"Within usury (ribā) is corruption, injustice, and the destruction of wealth."* [13]
- The main reason why the rich continue to get richer and the poor get poorer in a Capitalist System is because of the set up of interest.[14] Developing an Economic System on the basis of giving non-interest bearing loans would reduce the inequality between the rich and the poor.

In summary, it is important to understand that the obligation of charity in Islam is part of a wider Economic System that aims to bring about equity among people, and prevent the large-scale wealth inequality and gross poverty that we see in the world today.

7 One can look this up in the Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verse 85.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn (83), Verses 1-6.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Taghābun (64), Verse 16.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 275.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 279.
12 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 100, P. 119.
13 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 100, P. 119; Even though taking and giving interest is prohibited in general, there are some exceptions. For example, it is allowed for a Muslim to take interest from a non-Muslim bank.
14 *Sacred Economics:* Chapter 6, "The Economics of Usury" - Sacred Economics: Charles Eisenstein. Sacred Economics | Charles Eisenstein. (2012, December 20). Retrieved January 9, 2023, from http://sacred-economics.com/sacred-economics-chapter-6-the-economics-of-usury/

Activity 4.2b: Venn Diagram

Create a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the differences of a Capitalistic Economic System and the Islamic Economic System.

1. Are there any similarities, or is it a complete contrast?

Activity 4.2c: Review Questions

1. Describe an Islamic Economic System. What does it entail? How does it function?

2. Why is fairness and justice an important concept in an Economic System? Make a connection with one of the *Uṣūl ad-Dīn*.

3. What are the four Economic Principles? Fill in the following chart (the first one is completed for you as an example).

PRINCIPLE	ATTRIBUTES	REAL WORLD EXAMPLE
True ownership belongs to Allah ﷻ	Everything we have is not really ours, but in actuality belongs to Allah ﷻ.	• Land • Water • Air

4. What is usury *(ribā)*? How does Allah ﷻ refer to it in the Noble Qurʾān? Find the complete verse *(āyah)* and write the translated version.

CHAPTER 5

Practical Fiqh

5.1 Ḥijāb

5.2 Laws of Transactions

5.3 Sins of the Tongue

5.1 Ḥijāb

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explore the holistic concept of *ḥijāb* in Islam.
- Compare and contrast the difference between physical and modest conduct.
- Explain the ruling of *ḥijāb* for both men and women.
- Understand how *ḥijāb* plays an important role in today's society in terms of social media and technology.
- Explain the rules of gatherings and interactions with the opposite gender in Islam.

WHY DO MUSLIMS OBSERVE ḤIJĀB AND MODEST CONDUCT?

As Muslims, we believe that Allah ﷻ is All-Wise and that His commands show us the best way to reach our perfection. The rules of Islam are set for us by Allah ﷻ so that we may achieve success both in this world and the Hereafter. Ultimately, we observe *ḥijāb* and modest conduct because Allah ﷻ clearly commands us to do so.

Ḥijāb literally means 'barrier.' Over time, the term began to be used to describe the clothing and dress code that a person wears to cover oneself up in the presence of non-*maḥram*. It is also sometimes used to describe modest conduct between the genders.

Ḥijāb and Islamic guidelines regarding modest social conduct *(ʿiffah)* provide many benefits for an individual and society, some of which include the following:

- *Ḥijāb* and modest conduct protect society from corruption.
- They offer a way for men and women to interact in a safe environment on the basis of respect and dignity.
- The respectful clothing that *ḥijāb* defines, the command to control one's glances, and the Islamic modest code of conduct, creates a "barrier of modesty"—as opposed to allowing uncontrolled interactions between the genders.

Observing *ḥijāb* does not mean that someone is necessarily a perfect Muslim without any room for improvement. Allah ﷻ wants us to observe all of the guidelines that He has given us. Some may find it easy to dress and talk in a certain way, but may find it difficult to avoid anger and jealousy (for example). However, just because some people who observe *ḥijāb* might struggle in other areas, this should not reduce the importance of *ḥijāb,* or the incredible important benefits which it has for individuals and society as a whole.

In today's day and age, and particularly for those living in the West, *ḥijāb* has undoubtedly become a topic widely discussed. In this lesson, we will look at different dimensions of *ḥijāb* and modest conduct.

REVIEWING THE RULES OF ḤIJĀB

Ḥijāb for Men

The minimum obligatory *(wājib)* dress for males is to cover their private parts in front of *maḥram* and non-*maḥram* women and men. However, if leaving the rest of the body uncovered may lead oneself or others to fall into any sins, lustful glances, or immodest interactions, then a man must cover up the rest of his body to the extent that is usually covered by men. It is good and highly recommended to always wear modest clothing.

The other component of *ḥijāb* for men is to lower their gaze and avoid looking at women in a lustful manner. In fact, the Noble Qurʾān when discussing *ḥijāb*, first addresses the men and commands them to lower their gazes.

Ḥijāb for Women

According to all contemporary *marājiʿ*, it is obligatory—and has been since the time of the Prophet ﷺ—for women to cover all of their hair and entire body (with the exception of the face and hands) from any non-*maḥram* men. The clothes used must cover the entire shape and contours of the body (they have to be loose-fitting); and they cannot be attractive or see-through.

This obligation includes a woman to cover up in front of older boys who have not yet reached the age of *bulūgh* but are *mumayyiz* (able to distinguish between good and evil, especially relating to gender and intimate relationships).

The parts of a woman which can be left uncovered are:

- The two hands up to the wrists.
- The face (as long as it is not adorned)—up to the chin.

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think "adorned" means in the Jurisprudential sense? Why would this make the woman have to cover up her face if it is adorned?

Activity 5.1a: Applying the Criteria

In predominantly non-Muslim societies, teenagers may at times struggle between maintaining their Islamic dress code and fitting in with their friends and society. Give some guidance to the teenagers mentioned below about what they can wear to meet both the criteria of *ḥijāb,* and at the same time feel like they are part of the society.

1. Sameer is 14 years old and is going to his school boys' swim meet. Most of his teammates will be wearing board shorts with no shirt. What could Sameer wear to best maintain his Islamic dress code?

2. Mariam will be attending a sports festival. She loves sports and is very athletic. Although she would like to participate, she also would like to maintain her *ḥijāb* and modest conduct. Give Mariam some ideas for what she can wear and what types of activities she can participate in.

SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Social interaction is an important aspect of our lives, as we all need to communicate to get things done in our workplaces, community centers, schools, and other settings. However, when it comes to interactions between men and women, Islam has specific rules and guidelines. These help to create pure environments, and stop corruption and sins happening in our communities and society.

Interactions with the Opposite Gender

When speaking to someone of the opposite gender, we should observe the following rules:

1. There should be no forbidden *(ḥarām)* intentions or inappropriate attractions.
2. Do not use a tone or voice that is too soft or attractive.
3. The topic of conversation must be appropriate and relevant.
4. Avoid being alone with no one else present.
5. Keep interactions as professional as possible.

In general, when it is required for men and women to interact with one another, they should stick to what is absolutely necessary. They must avoid excessive joking, entering into personal matters, inappropriate topics of conversation, or becoming over-familiar with one another. This also applies to young people. In fact, whenever possible, we should avoid being around the opposite gender at all. The following story shows how careful the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ were about this issue.

Once a blind man asked for permission to enter Sayyidah Fāṭimah's house, so she put a veil between them. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ noticed her actions and asked: *"Why did you keep a veil between you and him when he cannot even see you?"*

She ﷺ answered: "O Messenger of Allah, it is true that he cannot see me, but I can see him, and he can smell my fragrance." [1]

When speaking to the opposite gender, here are some tips to remember:

- Beware of your intentions. Make sure your interaction is good, justified, and absolutely necessary, such as doing a project at school, or some voluntary work at the masjid.
- Stick to what is pertinent. Limit the conversation to the task at hand and do not go beyond that.
- Be professional in your behavior.
- Do not joke or flirt around. It is very easy to get comfortable speaking to a person of the opposite gender, and sometimes joking or flirting can create improper feelings in either of the two people. Even if one person's intentions are not evil, they can easily become wrong.
- Dress modestly and speak respectfully—do not soften your voice or make it more attractive.

STOP AND REFLECT: In the above *ḥadīth*, Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ put a veil between her and a blind man. What does this teach us in terms of modest conduct? What lesson(s) can we draw from this *ḥadīth*?

Attracting Attention

It is forbidden *(ḥarām)* for a woman to show off in such a way that it could attract a non-*maḥram* man's attention. Therefore, to walk in a certain way, or speak in a provocative manner that attracts attention, is not allowed. Similarly, it is not permissible for a man to act in a way that draws attention to himself from the opposite gender.

Rules of Touching

Men and women who are non-*maḥram* are not allowed to have any physical contact at all. Therefore, shaking hands or giving a "high-five" to someone of the opposite gender is not permissible. Playing sports with the opposite gender if it involves any kind of physical contact, anything which compromises the *ḥijāb*, something that entails inappropriate looks, or things which can lead to sins, all of these and such things are not allowed at all.

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, Pp. 91-92.

Mixed Gatherings

Islam highly discourages mixed gatherings which can lead to inappropriate interactions or other types of sins. When families or friends gather, the safest way is for the males to gather in one place or room, and for the females to gather in another room, especially when conducting activities that can lead to compromising *ḥijāb* or inappropriate interactions.

It is also important to remember the following crucial points:

- A cousin is **not** *maḥram* to another cousin of the opposite gender. For example, a 15 year old boy needs to treat his 10 year old female cousin with respect and observe modest conduct with her, and she needs to observe *ḥijāb* in front of him.
- A brother-in-law or sister-in-law are non-*maḥram* to their counterpart of the opposite gender. This means that a woman must wear *ḥijāb* in front of her husband's brother, or her sister's husband, etc., and she must observe the rules of modest conduct with them as well.

ḤIJĀB ONLINE

When we talk about *ḥijāb*, it also includes modest conduct which extends to how we interact with others on social media and other online platforms. While it may be clear that we should not post pictures that are contrary to Islamic dress code online, we should also remember what we post or comment on social media should be in a way that complies with Islamic modest conduct. Once something is posted on the internet, it is available to be searched and stored forever, even if we later want to delete it. This gives us even more reason to be careful online.

The same rules that apply with face-to-face interactions also apply to online interactions. Thus, when we use any form of social media such as Instagram, Twitter, texting, WhatsApp, or even email, we have to follow the same rules of modest conduct that we discussed earlier. We have to make sure to:

- Keep the interaction direct and to the point.
- Avoid joking or being inappropriate in any way.
- Avoid the use of any kind of foul language.

Allah ﷻ knows how hard it is for us to behave in a way that might be different from everyone else we interact with, but remember, we are doing this for His pleasure, and He will reward us accordingly. *Ḥijāb* is not only about do's and don'ts—it is a much deeper part of our entire religion, and observing this act properly will help us get closer to Allah ﷻ.

Therefore, we must be careful with all of our **interactions with the opposite gender**—whether that be in person or online. If a non-*maḥram* messages you privately and it is unnecessary or irrelevant, then you should not respond. Islamically, this is not considered bad etiquette *(akhlāq)*. If you are uncomfortable with how someone is treating you, then reach out to a trusted individual.

Activity 5.1b: Scenarios

With each of the scenarios below, describe how the situation could lead to sin, as well as how to prevent that evil action.

Scenario 1: Leena is scrolling through her Instagram page and notices an old male friend pop up as one of the 'people you may know.' Curiosity gets her to follow him. Two minutes later, he messages her saying: "Omg Leena! Is that really you? Missed you so much!"

INTERACTION LEADING TO SIN:

HOW TO PREVENT THAT EVIL ACTION:

Scenario 2: Noah was gaming when he noticed a girl complimenting his tactics and moves. As she continued to message him, she started to send hug emojis.

INTERACTING LEADING TO SIN:

HOW TO PREVENT THAT EVIL ACTION:

Activity 5.1c: Online Interaction Scenarios

Read through this scenario, then answer the questions below.

Shayma began to exchange messages with a boy over Instagram a few months ago. Today, she plans to meet up with him at 1:30pm at the local park while skipping school.

Questions:

1. How do you think their relationship developed to want to now meet each other in person?

2. What are some of the dangers of Shayma meeting up with him?

3. How could this situation have been avoided?

4. How would the rules of *ḥijāb* and modest conduct protect Shayma from falling into these types of situations?

Activity 5.1d: Graphic Organizer

Create a graphic organizer on the concept of *ḥijāb*. Be sure to include physical and social concepts within your map. Think about all the possible things that *ḥijāb* includes for both males and females.

FRIENDSHIPS WITH THE OPPOSITE GENDER

Muslims should have good relations with all people—both males and females—at school, at work, with neighbors, and so on. We should be kind and courteous to everyone. However, it is not allowed to take members of the opposite gender as personal friends with whom we develop close relationships. Attractions between males and females can never be switched off, so friendships between opposite genders can often end in sinful acts.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

> "Do not [even] come near fornication, for it is indeed lewdness and an evil lifestyle." [2]

The laws of Islam are from Allah ﷻ, our Creator, who knows our weaknesses, as well as our strengths, better than we ever can. Women by nature need to be admired and cherished, while men are attracted to visual beauty. Allah, the Almighty and All-Knowing, therefore warns us against our own natures, which may lead us astray if we do not exercise caution and take the necessary safeguards.

The principles for maintaining our modesty are very broad. This allows them to be applied in any given situation. In the above sections, we covered the main principles behind *ḥijāb* and the manner of interaction in practical situations.

STOP AND REFLECT: Spiritual Connections: How do you think following the rules of *ḥijāb* and modest conduct can help increase the inner faith *(īmān)* of a person?

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 32.

Activity 5.1e: Venn Diagram

Create a Venn Diagram contrasting and comparing the Jurisprudence of *ḥijāb* for both men and women in Islam. Be sure to include all aspects covered in this lesson.

5.2 Laws of Transactions

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain and understand the transactions of impermissible *(ḥarām)* and permissible *(ḥalāl)* foods.
- Understand transactions in regard to things that are impure *(najis)* such as pork and alcohol.
- Explain the Islamic ethics of food.

KAHOOT QUIZ

https://create.kahoot.it/share/08-08-10-rules-of-food-and-drink/d3152517-a5ab-486c-adb8-5055938a5ce7

AL-MĪTAH:
Meat from an animal which died naturally or is not slaughtered in an Islamic Manner

As we learned in previous lessons, Allah, the Almighty and Wise, has placed in us many desires, and one of these desires is hunger. With every desire though, He has given us a specific way to fulfill it. When it comes to the desire for food, He commanded us to eat only those things which are permissible and those things which will not harm us. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

> "O people, eat from whatever is on the earth (that is) lawful and good…" [1]

In previous years, we learned the rules about which foods are allowed for a person to eat, and which are not allowed. In this lesson, we will learn some further rules in relation to food and drink, specifically in relation to business transactions involving these things. We will also look at some other rules related to transactions and end up by reflecting on how our food choices affect us and the world around us.

Activity 5.2a: Kahoot!

Before proceeding with our lesson, we will take part in a Kahoot Quiz which will review the rules of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* food and drink.

Click on the link in the call-out box on the left to play! Either individually or create teams!

PROHIBITION OF TRANSACTING IN SPECIFIC FOODS

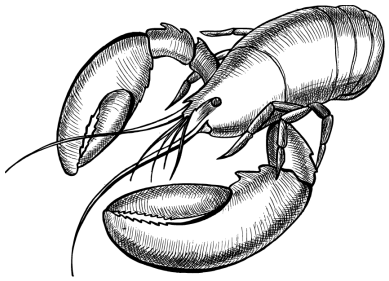
As we learned in previous years, the Noble Qurʾān clearly mentions that pork, alcohol, and meat from animals which die naturally or are not slaughtered in the Islamic way *(al-mītah)* are completely forbidden to be consumed. It is also unlawful to buy or sell this meat.

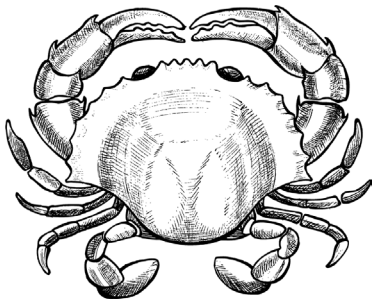
As a general rule, selling non-*ḥalāl* products to Muslims is prohibited, and the money earned from such an activity is illegitimate. This applies to selling any meat or meat products whether canned, packaged, or not.

There are different rulings when it comes to dealing with such products. Some have to do with selling—meaning when someone owns a store and they want to sell products to customers. Others have to do with working at a restaurant or at a grocery store which sells these kinds of products.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 168.

When it comes to selling or serving non-*ḥalāl* meat or other products to non-Muslims, here are some general rules:





1. If it is a product that is not *najis* but is not *ḥalāl*, such as crabs, lobsters, or fish without scales, then it is permissible.
2. If it is a product that is *najis,* then:
   - **a)** If it is pork, it cannot be sold or served, even to a non-Muslim who does not consider it to be *ḥarām*. However, it would technically be permissible to slaughter pigs or to cook pork, as long as that person does not sell or serve the pork.
   - **b)** It is not permissible to serve or sell wine, beer, or other forms of alcohol, or to be part of the process of allowing people to buy or consume wine, beer, or other forms of alcohol. For example, stocking grocery shelves with these products, or selling newspapers that advertise them would not be allowed.
   - **c)** For non-pork, non-*ḥalāl najis* meat products *(al-mītah)*, according to Āyatullāh Khamenei's ruling, it is not allowed to sell or serve them even to non-Muslims who consider them to be permissible. According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī's ruling, it is allowed to serve these products to non-Muslims. Practically, it would be very difficult to uphold this ruling when working at a restaurant where you are serving the general public. As well, it would be quite difficult or almost impossible to know who is and who is not a Muslim.
     - The prohibition of selling *al-mītah* extends to other products from the animal as well, including its skin or hide (which may be used for leather products such as belts or shoes).
       - ▹ If there is a possibility that an animal was slaughtered in an Islamic manner, then products produced from that animal—for something other than eating—such as leather belts or shoes can be bought and sold. "Possibility" here means there is a non-negligible chance, or a greater than 2% chance that it was slaughtered in this manner.
       - ▹ Wool is not included in this ruling, thus, it is permissible to sell wool from an animal that is *al-mītah*.

According to Āyatullāh Sīstānī's rulings, one exception to these rules is if someone is working as a cashier for a non-Muslim store owner, the buyer is a non-Muslim, and the cashier only has to ring in the purchase. That would be allowed, even if the item is, for example, wine. In this case, the cashier is not serving the wine, promoting it, or making money from it—the cashier is only collecting money for it on behalf of the non-Muslim owner.

Therefore, we are not allowed to work in food shops or restaurants where we have to serve non-*ḥalāl* and *najis* products (example: bacon, or non-*ḥalāl* chicken at KFC, or non-*ḥalāl* burgers at McDonalds). However, if we are not directly owning such restaurants, or we are not serving the item (i.e. we are working in the kitchen, not as a waiter), and we are not facilitating the consumption of alcohol, then this is okay.

STOP AND REFLECT: Living in the West, it can often be difficult to find employment that is *ḥalāl* since a lot of customer service jobs have to deal with *ḥarām* foods or alcohol. Make a list of jobs that you could find locally that would be permissible to have.

ALCOHOL

Any involvement in providing alcohol is forbidden *(ḥarām)*. This applies also to transporting it, delivering it, driving a person to drink (for instance, a taxi driver taking a person to the pub), and eating at a table where alcohol is being served. The following has been narrated from Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ:

"Allah ﷻ has cursed alcohol, its growers, those who squeeze it [from the grapes], its drinkers, its servers, its buyers, its sellers, those who live on its income, its transporters, and the ones to whom it is being transported." [2]

If wearing clothing with names of alcohol companies is considered advertising for alcohol, then one is not allowed to wear such clothing.

It is also forbidden to eat at a table on which alcohol or any other intoxicant substances are being consumed. Based on obligatory precaution, it is even forbidden to sit at such a table.

FOOD ETHICS

Beyond the rules of what is *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* to eat, as Muslims, we also have other responsibilities, some of which include:

- Have healthy eating habits so that we can look after our bodies which are a trust that Allah ﷻ has given us.
- Avoid waste and extravagance, do not throw any food out, and do not overeat.
- Protect the environment—try to recycle and compost as much as possible.
- Keep in mind the effects that our eating and purchasing habits have on the world around us.

We will go through the presentation (Link and QR code on the left) which will explore these issues further.

FOOD AND ETHICS

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1kcfx9ElKxo3_iM4nOPItoC45ZnhmuyClSvWksEzmshg/edit?usp=sharing

2 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, Vol. 4, P. 4.

Activity 5.2b: Review Questions

1. What are some of our responsibilities as Muslims when it comes to food besides the transactions of food?

2. What is the rule pertaining to alcohol?

3. What does *al-mītah* mean? Give a real life example.

4. Is it permissible to serve pork to non-Muslims? Why or why not?

5. Why is it important to be aware of the world around us when it comes to food and drink? What effects does our own personal eating habits have on the world around us, and why is this an important aspect to our Islamic identity?

Activity 5.2c: Case Study

Write a letter to your masjid's administration describing how the masjid serves food, what they serve, and how people dispose of food. Suggest three things that you think will help improve the masjid in relation to how they deal with and serve food. Make sure you have at least two verses of the Qurʾān or *ḥadīth* to back up your points that you know from prior knowledge with the correct citations. To help you prepare and develop your letter, fill in the following boxes.

Introduction: Formal Islamic greeting and a sentence appreciating their hard work. Make *duʾāʾ* for them before adding a concrete explanation of what you would like to address to them.

Body 1: How does the masjid/center serve their food? What kind of food does the masjid serve? Include a verse from the Qurʾān that fits with what you are describing.

Body 2: How the people of the masjid dispose of their food. Include a verse from the Qurʾān that fits with what you are describing.

Body 3: Suggestions on how they can be better at attempting to improve their dealing with food. Include a verse from the Qurʾān or a *ḥadīth* to support your arguments.

Closing Statement: End the letter on a positive note

Consult the following rubric to guide you in your writing.

	1 INEFFECTIVE	2 SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 CONSIDERABLY EFFECTIVE	4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
Grammar	There are 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There are 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There are 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There are no grammatical mistakes in the writing.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content meets the Islamic Principles.	Content meets the Islamic Principles, however, there is a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented meets almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented suits all Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Letter is distractingly messy and/or does not reach the targeted audience (no flow).	Letter presented is somewhat creative and has flow.	Letter presented is in an engaging manner, but lacks flow.	Letter is presented in an engaging way, and flows from one point to the next.
Quality	The letter is not compelling or convincing.	The letter is somewhat convincing or compelling.	The letter is convincing and compelling.	The letter is extremely compelling and convincing.

YOUR LETTER TO THE MOSQUE ADMINISTRATION

5.3 Sins of the Tongue

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Discuss and explain different sins of the tongue in Islam.
- Define and explain backbiting, and issues related to it in Islam.
- Explain the consequences of discussing one's past sins in public.
- Analyze the different types of backbiting *(ghībah)*.
- Learn all the sins of the tongue so we can better practice self-awareness in our speech.

INTRODUCTION

One of the topics within Islamic rulings which is often not given enough attention is in regards to the sins of the tongue.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SPEECH

The Noble Qurʾān emphasizes the importance of choosing speech which is good or "the best" in every situation. Allah ﷻ advises humankind:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ **وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا** وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

*"And (recall) when We took a pledge from the Children of Israel [enjoining them to]: 'Worship no one except Allah, and do good to parents, and the relatives, and the orphans, and the needy, **and speak good to people,** and maintain the prayer, and give the zakāh."* [1]

وَقُل لِّعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

"And tell My servants to speak in a manner which is best." [2]

From these two verses, we understand that Allah ﷻ commands us to (i) speak what is best, and (ii) speak in the best of manners.

The traditions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ further emphasize the importance of these two principles.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ teaches us that: *"The value of a person is hidden beneath their tongue."* [3]

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: *"O Messenger of Allah, give me some advice!"*

The Prophet ﷺ replied: *"Guard your tongue."* He said: *"O Messenger of Allah! Give me some advice."* He again replied: *"Guard your tongue!"* He said: *"O Messenger of Allah! Give me some (more) advice!"* He then said: *"Guard your tongue! Woe be to you, will people in the fire of Hell be flung headfirst into the fire except because of what their tongues cultivated?"* [4]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 83.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 53.
3 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 1, P. 497.
4 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, Vol. 1, P. 154.

SINS OF THE TONGUE

Our scholars have listed as many as 30 major sins which may be committed by the tongue. Therefore, we should choose carefully when to speak; and when we do speak, we must be very selective of the words we are choosing.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

> "Most of the mistakes that human beings make are with their tongue." [5]

Often, a good or bad action is preceded by the good or bad choice we make in the words we use. For example, before a fist-fight, many times there will be shouting and name-calling, whereas saying something better can often lead us to do the right thing.

STOP AND REFLECT: Based on your current knowledge, what do you think are some of the 30 major sins that are committed by the tongue?

5 Daylamī, Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, *Irshād al-Qulūb*, Vol. 1, P. 477.

Activity 5.3a: Role-Play

In groups of 2-4 students, brainstorm some ideas about what often happens before a fist-fight and list a few of them. Choose one of these ideas and create a short play. Within your play, have one character who uses their tongue to be the role of the peace-maker in the situation. You will have 3-5 minutes to act out your play in front of the class.

Sins of the tongue include many sins that sometimes we do not even realize we are sinning. These include backbiting *(ghībah*—which is so common that some people do not even realize that they are committing this serious sin), swearing, (such as using foul language, or language that is considered to be inappropriate), insulting others, breaking promises, speaking harshly to our parents, and so on. It is important, as stated above, to choose our words wisely before we speak in any situation. Sometimes it can be easy to get wrapped into conversations with our friends and not even realize that we are gossiping or using inappropriate language—especially when our friends do the same—but as Muslims, we have a higher set of standards. Sins of the tongue are an important concept to learn and practice self-awareness to make sure we do not fall into any of these grievous sins.

GHĪBAH:
Making reference to something negative regarding a Muslim, when that thing is hidden from the people and the reference is made in their absence

BACKBITING (GHĪBAH)

The Qurʾān clearly prohibits backbiting:

> "O you who have faith!…And do not… backbite one another. Will any of you like to eat the flesh of one's dead brother? You would hate it!" [6]

According to traditions, those who backbite others are the most hated of creations, the worst of people, and the partners of Shayṭān.

Backbiting can be done by means of a person's:

- Speech
- Gesture
- Virtual (posting an embarrassing or private photo, or sharing hidden information about an individual through social media)

Backbiting includes situations where the person being referenced is:

- Dead or alive
- A family member of the person making the reference or not
- Young or old
- Happy to be referenced in this way or not
- It also includes situations where a person may be comfortable saying the same thing to the absent person in their presence. However, just because we would be comfortable saying it in their presence does not mean that it is permissible to say it in their absence.

Backbiting takes place when someone specific is referenced (for example: "I saw X person trip over his own laces, and it was so funny!"), although a non-specific reference may also be impermissible. For example, if a family has two children, and I say: "I saw one of their kids do something terrible at the field trip when they thought no one was looking," even though I did not backbite a specific individual, I might now cause the reputation of both of those children to be ruined in the eyes of others.

The definition of what is "negative" is what is commonly understood to be such by others in that day and age. This could include a negative reference to their:

- Physical characteristics
- Lineage/family background
- Character
- Actions
- Speech
- Practice of the religion
- Source of income

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 12.

Activity 5.3b: Explain it!

You are talking with your friend on the phone. Your friend starts a conversation about a person in your class that you believe is a form of backbiting. In order to stop the conversation, you say: “Let’s discuss something else, I do not want to backbite anyone.” Your friend does not understand what you are talking about and asks you what backbiting means. Explain backbiting.

LISTENING TO BACKBITING

It is forbidden *(ḥarām)* to listen to backbiting taking place. If the conditions are in place, then it is obligatory *(wājib)* for you to try and forbid that sin/evil from taking place (known in Arabic as *nahy ʿanil munkar)* and advising that person who is doing the backbiting to stop. It is also important to come to the defense of the person who is being talked about in a negative way. For example, if we hear someone backbiting about how awful the house X person else lives in is, then we can come to their defense by saying: "Their house may be poor, but I am sure there is a lot of love and happiness in that home, because they are such a nice family!" Or if we hear someone backbiting a student by sharing their low grade on an exam with others, we can come to their defense by saying: "I think they must have a lot of responsibilities at home that did not allow them to study enough for the exam."

Exceptions

There are some situations where making a reference to a hidden, negative aspect of a Muslim person's life or character is permissible. In such cases, even though backbiting would otherwise be forbidden, it becomes permissible or even necessary to share the negative information in order to prevent something worse from happening. Below is a list of some of these exceptions:

- When wrong has been done, for the purpose of seeking aid against a wrongdoer.
  For example: Presenting a case to an institution that can enact justice.
- As a preliminary to commanding someone to do an obligatory *(wājib)* action, or to stop doing a forbidden *(ḥarām)* act *(amr bil maʿrūf / nahy ʿanil munkar),* if there is no other way than backbiting.
  For example: You realize that a friend is taking a religious obligation lightly. You try to guide them, but they refuse to hear you out. You know there is an influential individual whom that person respects. You can go to that influential individual and share with them the details of what is happening (with the intention that they may be able to help the person out), even though in other circumstances, doing so would be backbiting that is impermissible.
- When you fear for the commitment to the religion of the one you want to do backbiting of.
  For example: Disclosing something negative and hidden about a person to a group of colleagues in order to plan a strategy for bringing that person back to being committed.
- When consulted regarding someone else for an important matter (like marriage, education, babysitting, business transactions, etc.).
  For example: When asked about a person for marriage purposes, disclosing something negative and hidden that would be of relevance.
- When protecting someone from intolerable harm or embarrassment requires revealing some hidden, negative information.
  For example: Pre-warning a host about some embarrassing medical condition one knows about a guest.
- Protecting a believer from falling into serious harm requires discussing some hidden or negative aspect(s) of another person.
  For example: Preemptively disclosing something that is negative, hidden, serious, or relevant about an individual to a believer who is, for example, considering marriage with that person (even though that believer did not consult you).

In these situations, we must limit ourselves only to what is necessary and the minimum of what needs to be disclosed in that situation.

Activity 5.3c: Scenarios

In the following scenarios, explain if the situation is the kind of talking which is permissible, or if it is an exception to backbiting.

1. Fatima is sitting in the library of her school. Zaynab rushes in and says: “O my gosh! Did you hear that Aliyah’s dad lost his job?”

2. Mahdi is worried about his friend Ahmed since he has stopped praying. Ahmed told Mahdi in confidence that he is doubting Islam for a couple of months now. Unsure about how to help Ahmed himself, Mahdi tells their other friend, Jawad, even though Ahmed asked him not to tell anyone.

3. Create a scenario of your own depicting the impermissible backbiting, and explain why it is considered backbiting.

4. Create a scenario of your own depicting an exception to backbiting, and explain why it is an exception.

REPENTING FROM BACKBITING

As we learned, backbiting is a serious sin. If we commit this sin, we must sincerely repent for it, feel remorse, and resolve not to do this action again. It is also recommended to seek forgiveness from the person we backbited. However, in some cases, telling them that we backbited them might ruin our relationship and lead to enmity. In that case, we should instead make *duʿāʾ* for them and ask Allah ﷻ to forgive them.

Other Sins of the Tongue

Besides backbiting, other sins of the tongue include saying the following things to a believer:

- Swearing
- Insulting, belittling, ridiculing, and making fun
- Troubling
- Slandering
- Terrorizing
- Cursing
- Cheating

In the remainder of this lesson, we will examine a few of these sins of the tongue in more detail.

Swearing

Swearing or using any language that would be considered as foul and unacceptable is not permissible in Islam.

The Ahlul Bayt ﷺ teach us in their *ḥadīth* that:

> "A person whose tongue is feared by the people is from the fire." [7]

"If a person swears (uses foul language) at one's Muslim brother [or sister], Allah will remove the blessings of His provisions from them, leave them to themselves, and disrupt their day-to-day lives." [8]

"From among the signs of a partner of Shayṭān is one who swears at others. They do not care what they say, nor do they care about what others say of them." [9]

Unfortunately, swearing can be a common habit among young people. We must try to avoid this temptation to "fit in" and refrain from using any foul language—whether our friends use it or not. Part of valuing ourselves as people and as Muslims, and respecting others, is not to engage in foul language.

Even if we are alone and no one can hear us, it is not proper for a believer to use inappropriate language.

7 Ṭabrasī, Raḍiyy ad-Dīn, *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, Vol. 1, P. 433.
8 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 16, P. 32.
9 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 16, P. 31.

STOP AND REFLECT: What influences people to use swear words? Consider the following reasons (you may come up with other influences as well):

- Inability to control one's power of rage
- Excessive pleasure when making others laugh
- Low self-worth
- Bad habits

What are a few ways that a person can gain control of their tongue and break the habit of swearing?

Insulting, Ridiculing, Belittling, and Making Fun

Insulting another believer is forbidden and a sin. Insulting is different from backbiting because it takes place in the presence of the person who is being insulted. However, even if we are alone and there is no one around to hear us, it is still not allowed to insult another person or use foul language in regard to them.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Whoever ridicules a believer—whether they be poor or not—Allah will not cease to ridicule them and be hateful toward them until they stop their ridicule."* [10]

We also learn from the numerous traditions that the sanctity of a believer is greater than that of the Kaʿbah.

The prohibition of insulting also applies to similar acts of the tongue such as making fun of a believer or ridiculing them.

Breaking Promises

Promising a believer with the intention of breaking the promise is prohibited and a sin. This applies even when speaking with family and friends. We should make promises only when we intend to fulfill them. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Do not make a promise that you are not confident of fulfilling (will not be able to fulfill)."* [11]

Āyatullāh Sīstānī rules that it is an obligatory precaution *(iḥtiyāt wājib)* to avoid breaking a promise whenever possible. If we want to give ourselves a way out of a promise in case of emergencies or other obstacles, then we can add a conditional statement to our promise, such as: "I promise to do that, *inshāʾAllāh,*" or "I promise, if Allah wills," or "I will try my best to do that."

Divulging or Publicizing One's Own Past Sins

Confessing one's sins to Allah ﷻ is recommended and highly desirable. After all, He is our Nurturer, and confessing our sins to Him is a sign of humility and a step toward repentance. However, confessing our sins to people in general is not allowed, unless there is a valid exception.

10 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 12, P. 27.
11 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, P. 253.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"All of my community can be forgiven...except those who commit an [evil] action at night and their Lord hides it for them. [But then] they wake up and say to others: 'I did such and such [sin] last night.'"* [12]

Imām ʿAlī ؑ also said:

> "Be very wary not to publicize sins for it is among the greatest of wrongs." [13]

Publicizing or divulging our sins to others can take different forms:

ALLOWED IF NECESSARY	NOT PERMITTED
When seeking counseling from a trusted counselor or scholar, and there is no other way	As a means of showing off and bragging
	Encouraging others to do the same sin

Divulging the Secrets of People

It is not permissible to spread or divulge a believer's secrets to other people. This includes sharing personal secrets of individuals by telling others, or through posting them on social media. It also includes recording a person without their knowledge, then sharing that recording with others. There are exceptions to this rule:

1. When there is a clear understanding that anything disclosed is not confidential.
2. When there is a need to disclose the secret for something more important. For example, when someone's life is in danger, disclosing their secrets to those who can help may be necessary.
3. When forbidding evil (doing *nahy ʿanil munkar)* depends on this. For example, there may be a student who is engaged in a sinful activity and the only way to help them is to disclose this information to a trusted teacher, counselor, or adult.

Speaking Unkindly to Parents

Speaking rudely to one's parents, or treating them in any way that would be considered denying them their rights or the care that they have for their child is not allowed. This is forbidden and a grave sin. Some examples of such inappropriate behavior include:

- Raising one's voice in anger or contempt
- Looking at them with rage
- Speaking with disrespect
- Using sharp words
- Using foul language in front of them

The need to speak respectfully with one's parents applies even if the parents are not speaking kindly to their children. Having self-restraint in such a situation is a difficult test for the child, but they will be greatly rewarded accordingly in the Hereafter.

The obligation to speak respectfully with one's parents does not prevent a child from disagreeing with their parents, or raising any concerns they may have with them. The child however needs to maintain etiquette and respect when raising a disagreement with one's parents.

12 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Vol. 2, P. 998.
13 *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah,* Vol. 2, P. 998.

Activity 5.3d: Review Questions

1. Why is listening to backbiting a form of backbiting?

2. Backbiting is a serious sin. How can we repent from this sin if we have committed it?

3. What is the verse *(āyah)* of the Noble Qurʾān that teaches us the importance of good speech? Write down the translation.

4. List three different exceptions to backbiting. For each exception give a real life example.

5. Why is backbiting such a major sin? List some practical ways that you can prevent yourself, your friends, or your family from committing backbiting.

6. Research a verse of the Noble Qurʾān that tells us not to speak unkindly to our parents. Write down the translation.

Activity 5.3e: Graphic Organizer

Complete the following graphic organizer. Think of real life examples that would be used today to explain the specific type of sin of the tongue. One example has been completed for you.

TYPE OF SIN OF THE TONGUE	DEFINITION	REAL LIFE EXAMPLE
Swearing	To use vulgar or offensive language.	Using offensive language during lunch time with friends, regardless if it makes them uncomfortable or not.

HISTORY & ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE

CHAPTER 1

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

1.1 A Global Invitation to Islam

1.2 Ḥajjatul Widāʿ (The Farewell Pilgrimage)

1.1 A Global Invitation to Islam

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand and explain the conditions of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah.
- Explain the circumstances surrounding the first obligatory annual *Ḥajj*.
- Showcase the patience of the Prophet ﷺ in all circumstances.
- Understand the motives and advancement of Islam from the letters of invitation to other rulers.

AN OVERVIEW OF PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

Name	Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullāh
Kunyah	Abūl Qāsim (and several others)
Title	Khātam al-Anbiyāʾ, al-Muṣṭafā
Parents	ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib and Āminah bint Wahb
Date of Birth	17th Rabīʿ al-Awwal 53 BH (570 AD), Known as *Āmul Fīl* (Year of the Elephant)
Birthplace	Mecca, Arabia
Date of Wafāt	28th Ṣafar 11 AH
Place of Wafāt	Medina, Arabia
Lifespan	63 Years
Location of Shrine	Masjid an-Nabawī in Medina, Arabia

TIMELINE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

53 BH
570 AD

Birth of Muḥammad ﷺ ibn ʿAbdullāh

In the year 5 AH, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ received a command from Allah ﷻ to declare that the annual pilgrimage to Mecca *(Ḥajj)* is an obligatory act in Islam. In the following year, the Prophet ﷺ had a dream that he was actually performing the *ṭawāf* (circumambulation) along with his companions. He understood from the dream that he needed to go to Mecca that very year.

The Prophet ﷺ announced to the Muslims that he intended to leave for the lesser pilgrimage *(ʿUmrah)* to Mecca in the month of Dhul Qaʿdah, 6 AH. The *Muhājirūn*—who had migrated from Mecca to Medina with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ—were delighted at this opportunity to return to their beloved hometown. The *Anṣār*—who were the original residents of Medina—were also keen to undertake this blessed journey. In all, about 1,400 Muslims prepared to accompany the Prophet ﷺ to Mecca.

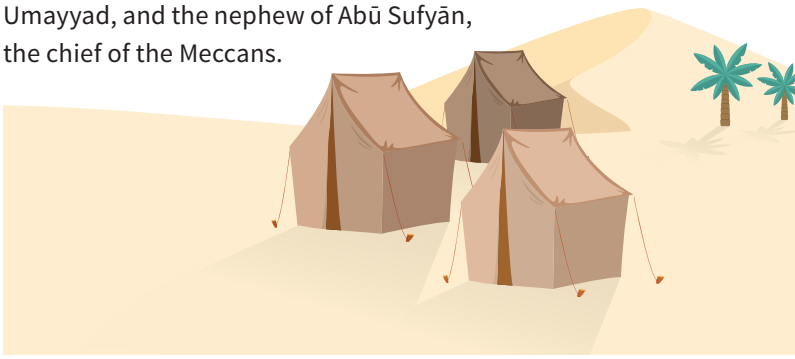
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ left Medina on schedule, and sent a group of people in advance to check the route ahead, and warn him of any threats from the Quraysh. He ordered the Muslims not to carry any arms other than daggers which a traveler would normally carry. Along the journey, the Prophet ﷺ and his companions put on their *iḥrām* (special clothing that pilgrim's must wear when going for pilgrimage), and he chose 70 camels to sacrifice during the *ʿUmrah*.

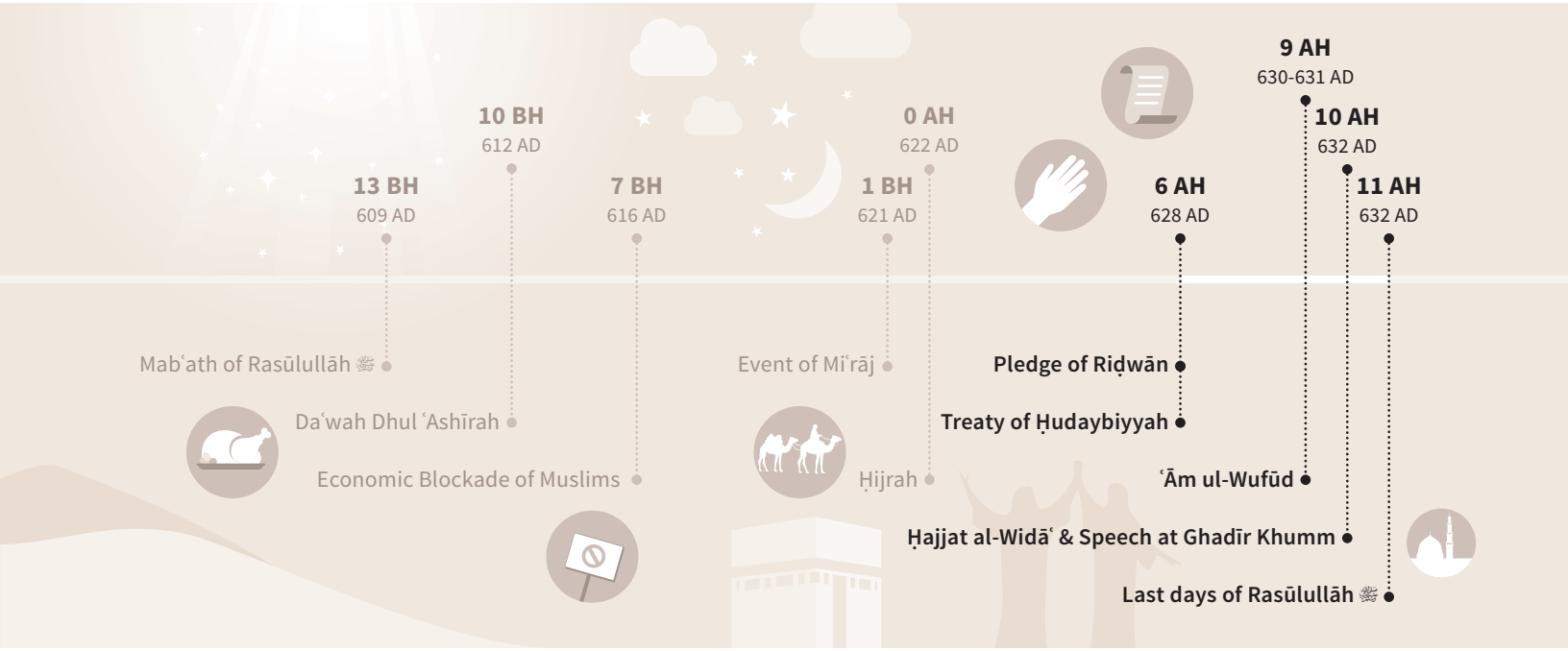
THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ intend to communicate to the enemies by only carrying minimal weapons?

Meanwhile, the Quraysh learned about the advance of the Muslims toward Mecca, and dispatched 200 soldiers to stop them. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ received word that an ambush awaited them on the current path, he asked his guide to take them on a route that would bypass the enemies. After traveling through rough country, they arrived at a place called Ḥudaybiyyah—about 10 miles from Mecca.

Here, the Prophet ﷺ ordered the Muslims to stop and pitch their tents. He sent a message to the Quraysh that he wished to enter Mecca to perform pilgrimage. He also informed them that he had come in peace and wished to settle matters through discussion. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān as his messenger because he was an Umayyad, and the nephew of Abū Sufyān, the chief of the Meccans.





For three days, ʿUthmān was delayed from returning to the Muslim camp from Mecca, and the Muslims had no news about his whereabouts. Rumors began to spread that he had been killed. The Quraysh were also showing hostility toward the Muslims by sending a party to capture a group of them as prisoners. Instead though, the party of Quraysh were captured by the Muslims, and the Prophet ﷺ subsequently ordered that they should be freed as they had not come for war.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw that there was a possibility of battle breaking out, and that the spirits of the Muslims was low, so he took a new pledge from the Muslims that they would support him even in the case of a battle. This famous renewal of oath was taken under a tree, and is known as the **Pledge of Riḍwān** ***(Bayʿatur Riḍwān)***. The event is mentioned in the Qurʾān as follows:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا۝

Certainly, Allah was pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down composure on them, and requited them with a victory near at hand. [1]

Soon afterward, ʿUthmān returned from Mecca, safe and unharmed. The Quraysh had sent a man named Suhayl with him to settle the dispute peacefully. As a result of the discussions between Suhayl and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, a peace treaty was signed between the Muslims and the Quraysh. This came to be known as the **Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah**.[2]

The conditions of this Treaty were as follows:

1. The Muslims would return to Medina that year without performing the pilgrimage.
2. They could return the next year for *ʿUmrah* but their stay would not exceed three days.
3. The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except sheathed swords.
4. There would be no war between the Quraysh and the Muslims for ten years.
5. Any Meccan who tried to migrate to Medina without the permission of their tribe would be deported back to Mecca even if they were a Muslim, but any Muslim in Medina who wished to return to Mecca even without permission of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would not be stopped from going there.
6. Any tribe in Arabia would be free to join any of the parties of the Treaty, and the allies of either side would also be bound by this Treaty.[3]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 18.
2 Ibn Hishām, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 783.
3 *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 784.

STOP AND REFLECT: Does the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah sound more advantageous to the Muslims or the Meccans? Why?

At the face value of this Treaty, it seemed like it was to the advantage of the Meccans and to the disadvantage of the Muslims. Some individuals in the Muslim camp, like ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, even objected to this and argued that it was wrong for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to agree to such a Treaty that was against the interests of the Muslims.[4] However, in the long term it proved to be the best thing for the Muslims. The peace agreement allowed the Muslims to focus on propagating Islam, and introducing the message of the Qurʾān to the rest of the world.

In fact, Allah ﷻ had not previously congratulated the Muslims for the battles they won. But when this Treaty was signed, Allah ﷻ called it a 'Clear Victory' and revealed Sūrah al-Fatḥ which begins with the verse:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا

"Indeed We have inaugurated for you a clear victory." [5]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner go through the conditions of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Make a list of how the Treaty proved to be advantageous for the Muslims based on the history you know. Why do you think this Treaty was praised by Allah ﷻ? Compare your list to others in the class.

After staying for some days at Ḥudaybiyyah, the Muslims returned back to Medina.

THE YEAR OF DEPUTATIONS (ʿĀMUL WUFŪD) AND INVITATIONS TO RULERS

In the peace that followed the signing of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw a great opportunity to invite others to Islam. He started his propagation *(daʿwah)* to neighboring lands, inviting their rulers and people toward Islam in the year 7 AH.

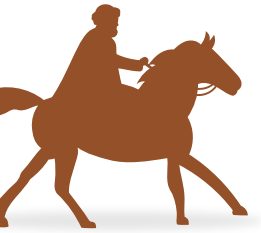
At the time, there were four powerful states around Arabia: Persia (Iran), Byzantium (Europe, also called Rome by the Arabs), Egypt, and Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

4 *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 784.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 1.

THE LETTER TO PERSIA

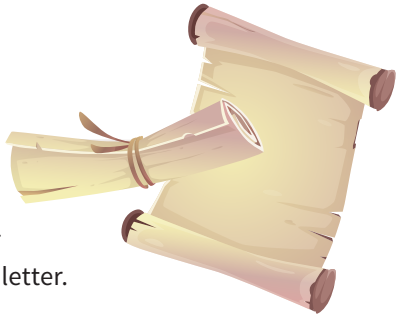
When the Prophet ﷺ sent a letter with a messenger to the Emperor of Persia inviting him to Islam, the Emperor flew into a rage. He tore the letter to pieces, and rudely threw the messenger out of his court. The Prophet ﷺ was displeased to hear this and prayed: "O Lord! Tear his kingdom into pieces." [6]

The Emperor of Persia then sent a letter to the ruler of Yemen, an area governed by Persia, ordering him to send some men to capture the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and bring him to his court. Two agents from Yemen came to Medina to carry out these orders. When they saw that the Prophet ﷺ had the support of so many Muslims, they realized that it was impossible to arrest the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. However, they informed the Prophet ﷺ about the orders they had received, and warned him of the consequences of displeasing the powerful Emperor of Persia. In reply, the Prophet ﷺ told them that the Emperor had just been killed by his own son who was now the new Emperor.[7]



The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then advised those men to tell the people of Yemen to come out of Persian control and embrace Islam. The officers were so impressed with the miraculous knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ that they accepted Islam, and thereafter many people from Yemen also became Muslims.

THE LETTER TO ROME



To the Caesar of Rome, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ sent another messenger with a letter of invitation to Islam. The messenger was received with honor and Caesar was impressed with the content of the letter.

After making enquiries in Arabia and having discussions with some of the Roman priests, he was convinced that the message was from the same Prophet whose coming had been foretold in the Tawrāh and Injīl. However, he was afraid that if he openly declared himself a Muslim, he would be removed from power by the influential Christians priests. Nevertheless, he wrote a letter to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressing his faith and devotion to him, and sent him several gifts.[8]

6 *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 1, Pp. 63-71.
7 *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 1, P. 48; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh ibn Khaldūn*, Vol. 1, P. 201.
8 Miyanjī, ʿAlī Aḥmadī, *Makātīb ar-Rasūl*, Vol. 1, Pp. 105-114.

THE LETTER TO EGYPT

After the ruler of Egypt read the letter from the Prophet ﷺ, he thought about the contents of the letter for a long time. He debated with the messenger and was convinced of the truth of Islam, but he was not prepared to give up his position as the head of the Coptic Church. He wrote a letter of regret to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and sent some gifts to him, along with a doctor. The Prophet ﷺ accepted the gifts from the king, but not the doctor. The king, whose name was Muqawqas, also sent his salutations to the Prophet ﷺ, indicating that internally he was accepting of Islam.[9]

THE LETTER TO ABYSSINIA

To the King of Abyssinia, the Prophet ﷺ sent two letters with a messenger. In one letter he invited him to Islam; and in the other he requested him to allow and make arrangements for the return of Jaʿfar ibn Abū Ṭālib and the other Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia in the earlier days of Islam when they were being persecuted in Mecca.

The King received the messenger of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with great respect and kissed the letters as a mark of respect before reading them. After he read the letter regarding the invitation to Islam, he immediately became a Muslim. He also obeyed the request of the Prophet ﷺ regarding the arrangements for the return of the Muslims, and sent his own son with them.

In addition, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also sent letters to many other tribes and states. Some did not commit to Islam because it did not suit them politically. However, many rulers became inclined toward Islam and sent their representatives to Medina to learn more about the final Prophet ﷺ and Islam.

By sending his messengers far and wide, the Prophet ﷺ showed that Islam was a religion not only for the Arabs, but for the entire world.

At times, the Muslims who risked their lives going as messengers to propagate Islam were tortured and killed. For example, in the year 4 AH, some tribes living outside Medina came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and claimed that they wished to become Muslims, and that they needed someone to teach them and their people about Islam. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent 10 trained Qurʾān reciters to accompany them back to their tribes, but once they left Medina, they were surrounded and killed. This is known as: *The Incident of al-Rajīʿ*.

A few months later, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was requested to send some missionaries to a tribe in Najd. The Prophet ﷺ could not refuse anyone who asked for guidance and decided to send 40 learned Muslims. The missionaries were attacked by others. Outnumbered, they were all martyred after a brave fight, except for one man whose name was Kaʿb ibn Zayd. He was badly wounded, but managed to return to Medina and give the news about what had happened. This event came to be known as the *Expedition of Biʾr Maʿūna.*

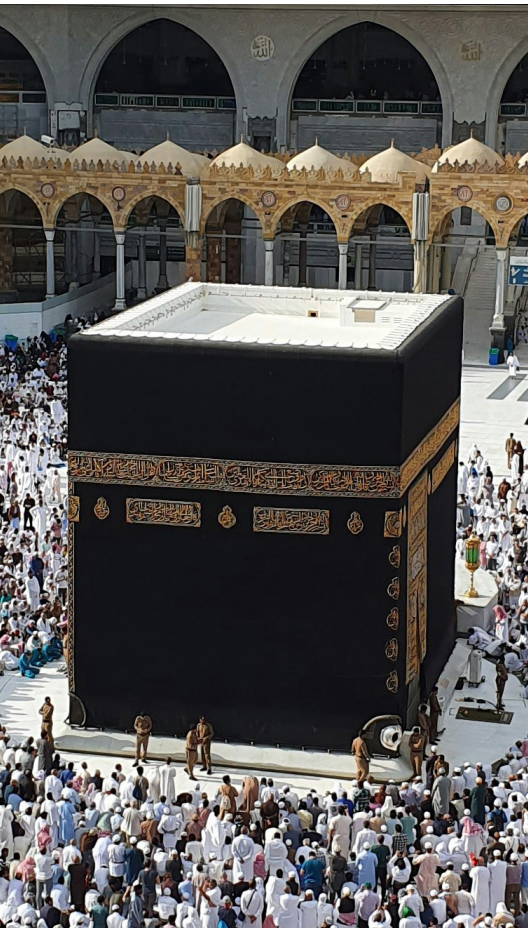
These events teach us about the great sacrifices that were made by the early Muslims in the spread and defense of Islam.[10] Throughout these trying times, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ practiced a lot of patience. He was able to withstand all the trials and tribulations—not only in the events of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah—but in his political letters with various leaders to spread the message of Islam.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ displayed the greatest patience, turning to Allah ﷻ and asking for His help at all times. In many verses of the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ tells the Prophet ﷺ to deal with the people and the various circumstances with the utmost of patience. In fact, one of the marvelous characteristics of the beloved Prophet ﷺ was his infinite patience and forbearance.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

There are many verses in the Noble Qurʾān where Allah ﷻ instructs the Prophet ﷺ to be patient. Find one verse and write down the translation. How can this particular verse pertain to circumstances in your own life? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

9 Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, *Tafsīre Nemūnah*, Vol. 2, P. 691.
10 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad. *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 2, P. 220.



'ash-hadu an lā ilāha illallāh'— I bear witness there is no god except Allah.

THE LAPSED ʿUMRAH

One of the conditions of the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah was that the Muslims would be permitted to visit Mecca the following year for *ʿUmrah,* and would be allowed to stay there for three days to carry out their religious duties. After a year had passed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared that the Muslims should prepare for *ʿUmrah*. 2000 Muslims put on their *iḥrām* and went with the Prophet ﷺ to Mecca.

The sight of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with 2000 Muslims reciting the *talbiyah*[11] as they entered Mecca was so majestic and inspiring that many idol-worshipers decided to join Islam and become Muslims.

As the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did *ṭawāf* (circumambulated) around the Kaʿbah, he ordered all the Muslims to recite with him:

لا إِلَهَ إلا اللّٰه وَحْدَه صَدَقَ وَعْدَه وَنَصَرَ عَبْدَه وَهَزَمَ الأَحْزَابَ وَحْدَه

"There is no god but Allah. He is the only One. He has acted according to His promise (that the Muslims would visit the Kaʿbah soon). He helped His servant, and he overcame the (polytheist) allies." [12]

The presence of the Muslims in Mecca was so great that they in fact took control of the whole place, including *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, the Kaʿbah, and the Hills of Ṣafā and Marwah. Seeing the Muslims perform their *ʿUmrah* with such force made the Quraysh leaders realize that Islam was here to stay, and nothing could stop this mighty religion of Allah ﷻ from spreading.

When it was time for the *Ẓuhr ṣalāh,* Bilāl recited the *adhān* from the top of the Kaʿbah. It was very difficult for the Quraysh leaders to see a black freed slave (whom they had tortured so much) standing on the Kaʿbah and speaking against their gods and idols by declaring '*ash-hadu an lā ilāha illallāh*'—I bear witness there is no god except Allah.

11 Talbiyah is a Muslim prayer invoked by the pilgrims as a conviction that they intend to perform the pilgrimage only for the sake of Allah ﷻ. It is recited upon putting on the *iḥrām*, so pilgrims can purify and rid themselves of worldly concerns. It starts with the recitation of *"Labbayk, Allāhumma Labbayk* - Here I am, my Lord, here I am."

12 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 6, P. 472.

After three days, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered the Muslims to uphold the promise of the Treaty and leave Mecca. The short visit of the Muslims nonetheless left a deep impression on the minds of the Meccan citizens. Those who had not yet embraced Islam were now very keen to learn more about Islam and the Muslims.[13]

With the excellent morals and behavior that they learned from the Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims won the hearts of the Meccan people, and gained a far greater victory than any battle or war could ever have given them. The Noble Qurʾān says:

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لاَ تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

"Certainly Allah has fulfilled His Messenger's vision in all truth: You will surely enter the Sacred Mosque (Masjid al-Ḥarām), if Allah wills, in safety, with your heads shaven or (hair) shortened, without any fear. So He knew what you (all) did not know, and He assigned [you] besides that a victory, near (at hand)." [14]

13 *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol.3, Pp. 424-427; ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol.2, P. 46.
14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 27.

Activity 1.1a: Review Questions

1. After the agreement of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, how did the Prophet ﷺ have to practice patience with the Muslims who did not agree with him, and even spoke up against him?

2. What were the conditions of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah? How were they advantageous for the Muslims and not the Meccans? What happened after the Treaty?

3. What were the reasons why certain leaders did not accept Islam?

4. One of the most miraculous traits of the Prophet ﷺ was his patience in all circumstances. Why is this an important trait to have? How can it help us in our daily lives?

Activity 1.1b: Case Study

In the year 8 AH, the Prophet ﷺ had to fight two battles. Choosing one of the two battles, write a paper following the instructions below. Make sure to consult the rubric.

The Battle of Muʾtah

Write a one-page summary of this battle explaining why it took place, who it was fought against, where it took place, etc. Include all of the key factors about this battle, and how it ended. In your summary, make sure you mention:

a. Which brother of Imām ʿAlī ؑ was martyred in this battle?
b. How did he die?
c. What did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say about him and his condition in Paradise?

The Battle of Dhāt as-Salāsil

Write a one-page summary of this battle explaining why it took place, who it was fought against, where it took place, etc. Make sure your summary also mentions:

a. Who brought victory to the Muslims in this battle?
b. What Sūrah of the Noble Qurʾān was revealed to describe this battle?

A good resource to use for your research is the book, *The Message,* by Āyatullāh Jaʿfar Subḥānī, which can also be read online at: **http://www.al-Islam.org/message/**. Write your summary in your own words—do not simply copy and paste from the internet. Use the rubric below to ensure that you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Citations	Research paper was not cited correctly.	Research paper was somewhat cited, but does not follow proper citation format.	Research paper was cited with few errors in citation format.	Research paper was cited with no errors in citation format.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however, there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Flow	The research paper did not have a clear flow, and it was without an introduction, body, or conclusion.	The research paper had somewhat of a flow, but lacked in the introduction, body, or conclusion.	The research paper had a flow with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion, but there were minor errors in it.	The research paper flowed well, and had no errors in the introduction, body, or conclusion.
Quality	The research paper was not convincing, and did not contain relevant information.	The research paper was somewhat convincing, and contained some relevant information.	The research paper was considerably convincing, and contained all relevant information.	The research paper was extremely convincing, and contained all of the relevant information.

1.2 Ḥajjatul Widāʿ (The Farewell Pilgrimage)

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

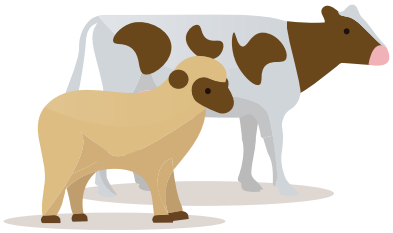
- Learn and understand the events leading up to *Ḥajjatul Widāʿ*.
- Analyze why the Prophet ﷺ chose *Ghadīr Khumm* as the place for his famous sermon.
- Explain the catastrophic events that took place prior to the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

We have studied the events of 8 AH and 9 AH, and how after the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, the Quraysh violated that treaty and the Muslims came to Mecca in large numbers and overtook it without bloodshed or fighting, freeing Mecca of idol worship forever. This event came to be known in history as *Fatḥ Mecca* (The Conquest of Mecca).

In the month of Dhul Qaʿdah, 10 AH, the Prophet ﷺ announced his intention to perform the pilgrimage *(Ḥajj)* to the House of Allah ﷻ in Mecca. This created much anticipation among the people, and Muslims from all around the Arabian Peninsula made preparations to perform this most noble pilgrimage with the Prophet ﷺ. Thousands of people even camped outside of Medina before the Prophet's departure in eager anticipation.

On the 26th of Dhul Qaʿdah, the Prophet ﷺ departed Medina. When he reached *Dhul Ḥulayfah* (currently known as *Masjid ash-Shajarah*), 450 km north of Mecca, he entered the state of *iḥrām,*[1] wearing two plain sheets of white cloth, and reciting the famous supplication which begins with *"Labbayk"* ("Here I am") in response to the Divine call to the pilgrimage. On the 5th of Dhul Ḥijjah, the day after arriving in Mecca, he went to *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, entering through the Gate of *Banū Shaybah.*[2]

After completing the circumambulation of the Kaʿbah (known as *ṭawāf)* seven times, the Prophet ﷺ offered a two *rakʿah* prayer behind *Maqām Ibrāhīm,*[3] drank water from the well of *Zamzam*, then went to the Mountain of *Ṣafā* and instructed the pilgrims that he would begin *saʿy*[4] there. When he arrived there, he turned toward *Rukn al-Yemānī* of the *Kaʿbah* and prayed to Allah ﷻ. He then jog-trotted part of the way, and when he arrived at the Mountain of *Marwah*, he stopped and prayed there. After performing *saʿy,* the Prophet ﷺ turned to instruct the pilgrims. He ordered those who had not brought sacrificial animals with them to come out of the state of *iḥrām* with the performance of *taqṣīr,*[5] treating the rites thus far as *ʿUmrah* and then re-entering the state of *iḥrām* for *Ḥajj*.



Like the Prophet ﷺ himself, those who had brought sacrificial animals were to remain in the state of *iḥrām* until those animals had been sacrificed at *Minā*. This order of the Prophet ﷺ weighed heavily on some who had not brought sacrificial animals and they refrained from following his clear command, claiming that they did not like to do what the Prophet ﷺ himself was not doing. This hesitation displeased the Prophet ﷺ. Those hesitating failed to realize that the Prophet's instructions were not due to his own whims.[6]

The pilgrims then awaited the dawning of the 8th of Dhul Ḥijjah. It was on this day that the rituals of the *Ḥajj* began.

1 A sacred state where when a person enters into that state, certain things become forbidden upon them.
2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 4, P. 250.
3 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 4, P. 254.
4 The walking between the mountains of *Ṣafā* and *Marwah* in Mecca.
5 Shortening the hair and/or cutting the nails.
6 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 4, P. 246.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss the command of the Prophet ﷺ that some people did not follow and their excuse for not following such a command. How does this still happen today? Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

GHADĪR KHUMM

After the rituals of *Ḥajj* were completed, the Prophet ﷺ decided to depart Mecca for Medina. Orders were given to begin the journey. Prior to *Ḥajj* season, the Prophet ﷺ was given the message of completing his mission this year and choosing his successor. It is important to understand that the Prophet ﷺ considered many locations throughout this journey to give Allah's final message. Upon reaching the region *Rābigh*, at a place called *Ghadīr Khumm*, Angel Jibrāʾīl appeared before the Prophet ﷺ and revealed to him the following verse:

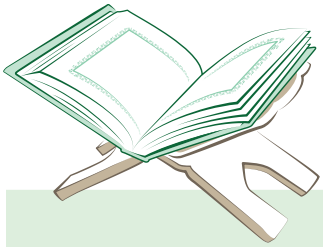
O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His message; and Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. [7]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is this verse of Qurʾān **so** important? What is Allah ﷻ telling the Prophet ﷺ?

Ghadīr Khumm was the perfect location because it was a junction all travelers had to come through before going toward their final destination. It was also a place where all of the pilgrims would be together, a place the Meccans would come to bid farewell, and where business people would come to sell and promote their products.

Mounting a pulpit erected from the saddles of camels, the Prophet ﷺ began by praising and glorifying Allah ﷻ, and announced that he would soon return to his Lord. He informed the Muslims about their responsibilities after him and gave them the keys to their salvation. He is narrated to have said: "O my followers! I am leaving behind two valuable assets as legacies to you, and it will be seen how you behave with these two legacies of mine." [8]

He then continued: "One of them is the Book of Allah, one side of which is related to Allah and the other side is in your hands; and the other thing is my progeny, my Ahlul Bayt. Allah has informed me that these two important things will not be separated from one another. O people, do not seek precedence over the Qurʾān and my progeny, and do not be negligent in your behavior toward them, or else you will perish."



"...I am leaving behind two valuable assets... One of them is the Book of Allah... and the other is...my Ahlul Bayt... do not be negligent in your behavior toward them, or else you will perish."

– The Noble Prophet ﷺ

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 67.
8 *Ḥadīth ath-Thaqalayn*; Abī Wāḍiḥ, *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*, Vol. 2, P. 1.

The Prophet ﷺ then raised the hand of Imām ʿAlī ؑ, and after introducing him to the people asked: "Who enjoys more rights over the believers than themselves?" They replied: "Allah and His Prophet know better." Then the Prophet ﷺ proclaimed:

Allah is my Master (Mawlā), and I am the master (mawlā) of the believers, and I am more deserving and enjoy more rights over them than they themselves. O people, for whomsoever I am the master (mawlā), this ʿAlī is also their master (mawlā). O Allah! Love those who love ʿAlī, and be inimical to those who are inimical toward ʿAlī. O Allah! Help ʿAlī's friends, humiliate his enemies, and make him the pivot of truth. [9]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Read the words of the Prophet ﷺ again that he said at *Ghadīr Khumm*. How does this narration show the true successorship of Imām ʿAlī ؑ? What arguments or proofs can you make about the concept of *Imāmah* in Islam? How do the two tie together?

9 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 27.

ABANDONING THE PROPHET'S COMMANDS

The Prophet ﷺ stated in *Ghadīr Khumm* that he would leave the world soon. He clearly stated that Imām ʿAlī ؑ is his rightful successor, and all those at *Ghadīr Khumm* witnessed and gave their congratulatory statements and allegiance to Imām ʿAlī ؑ. By 10 AH, Islam was firmly established and much could be gained by taking power and authority. As the month of Muḥarram, marking the beginning of 11 AH, drew near, a letter reached the city of Medina from a place called Yamāmah to the east. It was from a man, who had in fact earlier that year embraced Islam, claiming that he was now a partner in Prophethood with the Prophet ﷺ, and how half of the Muslim domains should be given to him. His name was Musaylamah, famously known as *Musaylamah al-Kadhdhāb*, the liar. In Yemen, to the south, another false claimant arose by the name of *Al-Aswad al-ʿAnsī*. However, an even greater threat loomed to the north.

Due to the growing power of the Muslims, the Byzantine Empire observed the events in the Arabian Peninsula. In the years after migration, they clashed with the Muslim forces. To neutralize this grave threat upon his return to Medina, the Prophet ﷺ ordered an army to prepare themselves for war. He appointed Usāmah ibn Zayd as the commander of the army. Usāmah was a young man, about twenty years old, whose father, Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, had been killed by the Byzantines in the Battle of *Muʾtah*. Sadly, the day after the Prophet ﷺ appointed Usāmah to lead the Muslim army, our Noble Prophet ﷺ fell ill with a high fever and headache.

Despite the Prophet's illness, some people among the Muslims objected and protested Usāmah's appointment. Efforts were also made to delay the army's departure. All this was done despite the Prophet's constant insistence for the army to proceed. This resistance to his commands disturbed the Prophet ﷺ so much that at one point he spoke so loudly that his voice could even be heard outside of the masjid, he said: "O people! Mischief has been sparked off and rebellion has appeared like the pieces of a dark night. You have no excuse against me. I did not declare anything lawful except that which the Qurʾān declared lawful, and I did not declare anything unlawful except that which the Qurʾān declared unlawful." [10]

> *"O people! Mischief has been sparked off and rebellion has appeared like the pieces of a dark night..."*
>
> – The Noble Prophet ﷺ

Tragically, the army never left from *Jurf* where they had camped, and the severity of the Prophet's illness was further used as an excuse to abandon the endeavor.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

How were the hypocrites able to easily misguide the Muslims to abandon the Prophet's commands even while he was alive? How does this compare to the actions of the enemies of Islam today?

10 Ibn Hishām, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 654.

Activity 1.2a: Review Questions

1. What is the verse of the Qurʾān that was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ at *Ghadīr Khumm*? Write down the translation of this verse.

2. What are the two weighty things that the Prophet ﷺ has left behind for us? What is the name of this narration in Arabic?

3. How are the roles of certain people important? Why was the rebellious nature of individuals an important aspect to understand in the event of the Prophet's death?

Activity 1.2b: Case Study

Ghadīr Khumm Presentation

Create a digital/bristol board presentation based on *Ghadīr Khumm*. In your presentation, include the historical event (what happened), as well as one narration from this lesson. Your goal is to explain the Event of *Ghadīr Khumm,* and prove the successorship of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. Consult the following rubric:

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic easier to understand, and/or had no sources.	Most graphics were related to the topic, and most of them had a source cited.	Most graphics were related to the topic and made it easier to understand. All graphics had a source cited.	All graphics were directly related to the topic, and all borrowed graphics had a source cited.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content did not meet Islamic Principles.	Content met Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Presentation was distractingly messy, and/or lacked design.	Presentation was somewhat creative, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Presentation was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Presentation was in an engaging and catchy manner in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The presentation was not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not function as a presentation and could have been more compelling	The presentation demonstrated quality work, but had some room for improvement.	The presentation was extremely compelling and convincing.

CHAPTER 2

Lives of the Maʿṣūmīn علیهم السلام

2.1 After the Death of the Prophet صلی الله علیه و آله

2.2 Sayyidah Fāṭimah's Last Months

2.3 Imām Ḥasan's Life: Peace Treaty to Martyrdom

2.4 Imām Ḥusayn علیه السلام: from Medina to Karbalāʾ

2.5 Imām ar-Riḍā's Legacy and Contributions

2.6 Imām ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā علیه السلام

2.7 Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād's Short Life

2.8 Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالی فرجه الشریف

2.1 After the Death of the Prophet ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

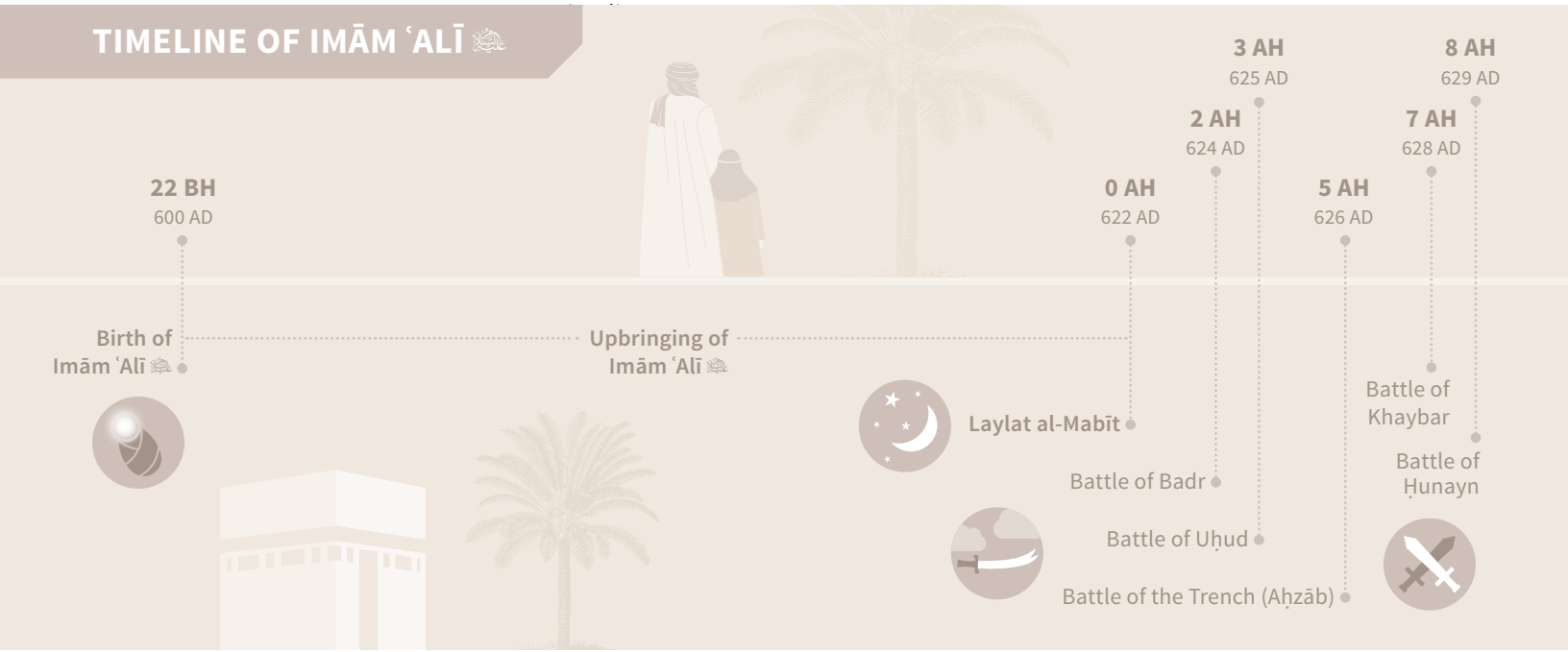
WE WILL:

- Understand how the event at *Ghadīr Khumm* proves the rightful successorship of Imām ʿAlī ؑ.
- Explain the history surrounding the events after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Analyze the hardships that Imām ʿAlī ؑ endured after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Understand the approach that Imām ʿAlī ؑ took during the reign of the first three caliphs.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ʿALĪ ؑ

Name	ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib
Kunyah	Abūl Ḥasan, Abūl Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb
Title	Amīrul Muʾminīn
Parents	Abū Ṭālib and Fāṭimah bint Asad
Date of Birth	13th Rajab 22 BH (600 AD), 30 ʿĀmul-Fīl
Birthplace	Inside of the Kaʿbah in Mecca, Arabia
Ring Inscription	المُلْكُ لِلهِ الوَاحِدِ القَهَّار - The Kingdom belongs exclusively to Allah, the One, the Prevailing
Number of Children	27
Duration of Imāmah	30 Years
Date of Martyrdom	21st of the month of Ramaḍān, 40 AH (661 AD)
Place of Martyrdom	Masjid al-Kūfah, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Struck by Ibn Muljim while offering *Fajr* prayers
Lifespan	63 Years
Location of Shrine	Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM ʿALĪ ؑ



Perhaps one of the most difficult events in the life of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ happened 11 years after migration *(Ḥijrah)* on the 28th of Ṣafar. It was on that day, the world lost the best human being to ever exist—the Noble Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and Imām ʿAlī ﷺ lost his brother and mentor. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was the only person with true understanding *(maʿrifah)* of the Divine light *(nūr)* of the final Messenger ﷺ, and this made losing the Prophet ﷺ even more difficult.

MAʿRIFAH:
true understanding

During this time, many people wanted to prevent Imām ʿAlī ﷺ from becoming the successor of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ because they wanted power for themselves. They saw an opportunity to steer people away from the Imām ﷺ and acted as if the Noble Prophet ﷺ was not in his senses when he passed away.

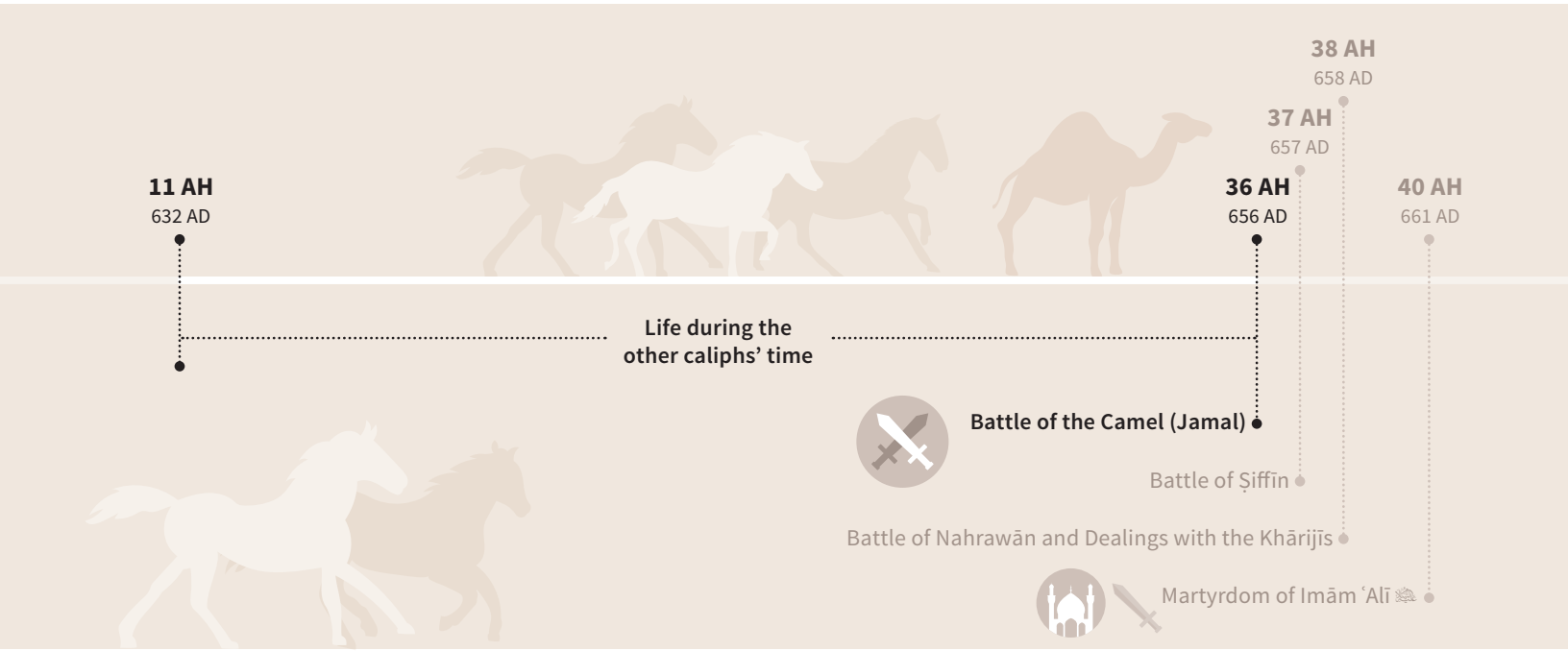
Painting by: Hassan RouholAmin

GHADĪR KHUMM

We have discussed many times how near the end of the Prophet's life, he gathered all of the Muslims at a place called Ghadīr Khumm. He told them that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was to be their leader and master, and that when he passed away, the Muslims had to hold onto two things: the Qurʾān and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.[1] This was not the only time the Prophet ﷺ made it clear that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was his Divinely-appointed successor after he departed this world. Imām ʿAlī's job was to guide the nation, continue the message of Islam, explain and clarify the teachings of the Qur'ān, and lead the Muslims.

However, just a few months after the event at Ghadīr Khumm, on a Thursday, when Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was very ill and in bed—just prior to his death—there was a great tragedy that happened which led to the division on who would be the leader after him. This incident showed the betrayal of some of the people who are called 'companions' of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

1 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 294.



THE INCIDENT OF THE TRAGEDY OF THURSDAY

The political divide among the Muslims began very early in the history of Islam. As Islam had grown very powerful during the last few years of the Prophet's life, many people were lured by the promise of power, wealth, and material success. This disease spread even to some of the close companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

Ibn ʿAbbās, a close companion and cousin of the Prophet ﷺ, said:

> *Thursday, and what a Thursday that was! The Messenger's pain became very severe, and he said: "Come here, I will write you a document which will prevent you from straying from the right path." But ʿUmar said, referring to the Prophet: "The man is speaking nonsense, and the Qurʾān is sufficient for us as a guide."*
>
> *The companions then quarreled in front of the Prophet, some of them agreeing with what the Prophet said, while others supported ʿUmar's view. When the debate became heated and the noise became louder, the Prophet asked them all to leave his house.*
>
> *The disaster was that this disagreement among the companions prevented the Messenger from writing that document for them.*[2]

Despite the Prophet's best efforts, his companions did not allow him to write down his will and command for who the next leader would be after his departure. These calamitous events caused Ibn ʿAbbās to later comment: "The greatest calamity for Islam was that the discord and dispute of some companions prevented the Prophet from writing his will which he intended to write."[3]

THE LAST MOMENTS OF THE PROPHET'S LIFE

With the dawning of Monday, the 28th of Ṣafar, 11 AH, the world became bereft of the one whose birth heralded countless blessings, good tidings, and guidance for all of humankind. The best human being in all of creation left this worldly realm. The most Noble Prophet ﷺ, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ibn ʿAbdullāh ﷺ, breathed his last while resting in the arms of his brother, his son-in-law, and his true successor: ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؑ.

On the fateful day of his death, his wife, Umm Salamah, narrated:

> *By Allah, the closest person [to the Prophet] at the time of his death was ʿAlī. Early in the morning on that day when he was going to die, the Prophet called for ʿAlī—who had been sent out to take care of some errand. He asked for ʿAlī three times before his return. ʿAlī came before sunrise. So, knowing that the Prophet needed some privacy with ʿAlī, we all came out (of the Prophet's room). I was the last one to leave; therefore, I sat closer to the door than the other women. I saw that ʿAlī lowered his head toward the Prophet, and the Prophet kept whispering things into his ears (for quite some time). ʿAlī was the only person who was [sitting] with the Prophet until the very end.*[4]

STOP AND REFLECT: Throughout the life of the Prophet ﷺ, there were many instances when he told the people that Imām ʿAlī ؑ had a special place. Think of at least three such situations. When did he say that Imām ʿAlī ؑ would be his successor?

2 Bukhārī, Muḥammad, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 1, P. 37, Vol. 4, P. 31, Vol. 4, P. 66, Vol. 5, Pp. 137-138, Vol. 7, P. 9; Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 5, P. 75, Vol. 5, P. 76; Ibn Saʿd, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, Vol. 2, P. 242, Vol. 2, P. 243, Vol. 2, Pp. 243-244, Vol. 2, P. 244, Vol. 2, Pp. 244-245. (Ahlus Sunnah Sources); Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 1, P. 184.

3 Iṣfahānī, Fayḍ al-Islām, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 12, Pp. 20-21.

4 Al-Kūfī, Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān, *Kitāb al-Mutaḥab,* Vol. 2, P. 87; Al-Nasāʾī, Aḥmad ibn Shuʿayb, *Khaṣāʾiṣ Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, Vol. 1, P. 130 (Ahlus Sunnah Source).

THE INCIDENT AT SAQĪFAH

As we have previously learned, there were numerous occasions where the Prophet ﷺ introduced Imām ʿAlī ؑ as his successor. One famous occasion was when the Prophet gathered his entire family to invite them to Islam. This event is called *Daʿwah Dhul ʿAshīrah*—Invitation of the Family/Clan. At the end of this gathering, he introduced Imām ʿAlī ؑ as his successor after his death.[5]

Another famous occasion was when the Prophet ﷺ left Medina in preparation for a battle, and asked Imām ʿAlī ؑ to stay back in Medina to protect it from the plots of the hypocrites. At this time, he said to him: "You are to me like Hārūn was to Mūsā, except that there will be no Prophet after me."[6]

Despite these, and many other such incidents, and the explicit announcement of Imām ʿAlī's successorship at Ghadīr Khumm,[7] several companions of the Prophet ﷺ ignored his command—that was directly from Allah ﷻ Himself—and later even claimed that the Prophet ﷺ never mentioned or appointed any successor.[8]

STOP AND REFLECT: How do you think Muslims who believe that Abū Bakr was the legitimate ruler after the final Messenger ﷺ interpret the traditions about Ghadīr? Why does interpreting this incident to indicate that the Prophet ﷺ was asking everyone to be Imām ʿAlī's friend not make any sense?

During the last days of the life of the Prophet ﷺ, many of the companions started to become anxious about leadership and power. Shortly before his death, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ ordered ʿUmar and Abū Bakr, along with some of their friends and followers, to leave Medina as part of an army ordered to head toward Syria to fight the Romans. However, they repeatedly ignored the Prophet's commands, citing their 'concern' for the Prophet ﷺ as an excuse. In complete defiance of the Messenger's orders, they remained in Medina until the Prophet ﷺ died.[9]

At such a delicate time, while Imām ʿAlī ؑ was attending to the Prophet ﷺ during his final moments, then preparing for his burial, some of the companions gathered at a nearby place called *Saqīfah,* and were discussing the issue of leadership. Each group was concerned that they would lose power by relinquishing the leadership to someone else. The *Anṣār*—the original natives of Medina—tried to claim leadership by stating how they supported the Prophet ﷺ when he had no supporters.[10] The *Muḥājirīn*—those who migrated from Mecca with the Prophet ﷺ—tried to claim leadership under the pretext that they were closer in kinship to the final Messenger ﷺ.[11]

They were ***all*** ignoring the fact that Imām ʿAlī ؑ had already been appointed by Allah ﷻ as Prophet Muḥammad's successor on numerous occasions. He was the greatest supporter of the final Messenger ﷺ since the very first revelation in the Cave of Ḥirāʾ and the ***only*** individual among all of them qualified to lead.

The limited number of people who had gathered in *Saqīfah* eventually decided to pay allegiance to Abū Bakr as the leader of the Muslims.[12] All of this happened while Imām ʿAlī ؑ was busy with the Prophet's final funeral rites: washing his blessed body, shrouding him, and burying him in the Masjid.

After the burial was finished, Imām ʿAlī ؑ came to find out that allegiance had already been given to Abū Bakr. Imām ʿAlī ؑ and his few sincere companions objected to this, and refused to pay allegiance to the appointed caliph.

5 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh al-Umam wal Mulūk*, Vol. 2, P. 279; Al-Ḥaskani, ʿUbaydullāh, *Shawāhid at-Tanzīl*, Vol. 1, P. 543. (Ahlus Sunnah Sources)
6 Ḥanbal, Aḥmad ibn, *Musnad Aḥmad*, Vol. 1, P. 277, Vol. 3, P. 417; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5, P. 129; At-Tirmidhī, *Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Vol. 5, P. 638. (Ahlus Sunnah Sources); Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 8, Pp. 106-107.
7 ʿAlī ibn Athīr, *Usd al-Ghabah*, Vol. 5, P. 253; Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī,* Vol. 2, P. 27; Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī,* P. 575; Shaykh Mufīd, *Aqsam al-Mawlā,* P. 35; Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Al-Iqtisād*, P. 351; Shaykh Ṭūsī, *Al-Rasāʾil,* P. 138; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wan Nihāyah*, Vol. 7, P. 349; This *ḥadīth* has been narrated by numerous narrators of both the Ahlus Sunnah and Shīʿah scholars—these are just a few examples.
8 For more details, one can refer to the book, *Then I was Guided,* by Muhammad Tijiani al-Samawi, and *Peshawar Nights,* by Sultanul Wa'izin Shirazi.
9 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 1, P. 183.
10 Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Imāmah wa al-Sīyāsah*, Vol. 2, P. 22. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
11 Athīr, ʿAlī ibn al-, *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh*, Vol. 2, P. 327. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
12 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 3, P. 206; *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh*, Vol. 2, P. 327. (Ahlus Sunnah Sources)

ATTACK ON THE HOUSEHOLD OF REVELATION AFTER THE PROPHET'S DEATH

The Prophet's passing away was only the beginning of the difficulties for his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ described those years as a period of great trials and tribulations, and he had to adhere to the best of patience and forbearance. He said: "I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation in the throat. I watched the usurpation of my rights until the first one went his way, but handed over the caliphate to [ʿUmar] ibn al-Khaṭṭāb after himself."[13]

Shortly after the Prophet's death, ʿUmar tried forcing Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr. To avoid civil war, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ remained patient. He did not want to let things reach the stage of bloodshed or military battle. However, he remained vocal about the fact that his Divinely-appointed position had been usurped.[14]

Overnight, the beloved Ahlul Bayt ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ were isolated, alone, and oppressed. For the short period of time that she lived after the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ cried day and night, and called out to her father:

> "Such afflictions have befallen me (after you) that if they were to befall on a day, it would have changed to a dark night!"

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ even had to witness his beloved wife and the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ, abused at the hands of the new caliph. The land of Fadak, which the Prophet ﷺ had gifted to her during his lifetime, was wrongfully taken away from her by Abū Bakr. She went to the masjid to give a powerful sermon about this from behind a curtain, but her focus was not on the material loss. She gave this sermon to reiterate to the people about their obligations, jolt their love for the Prophet ﷺ, and remind them that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was the rightful successor of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—appointed by Allah ﷻ.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ tried to remind the people about the Prophet's declaration at Ghadīr and other places, but it was useless. Abū Bakr, and his supporter ʿUmar, threatened those who opposed them. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ did not want to cause disunity or division among the Muslim nation, so he was forced to remain quiet, saying:

> "The religion of Islam is too great for me to cause disunity. I will remain silent, but when I see injustice, I will speak out against it."

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had great wisdom—which was given to him by Allah ﷻ—to know that this was the best course of action during this time. The circumstances dictated it best for him to remain silent.

The tragedy reached its peak when the caliph sent some men to Imām ʿAlī's door to demand his allegiance. Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, who was pregnant with their son, Muḥsin, went to the door to turn them away. The oppressors burned and knocked down the door, crushing her between the door and the wall, killing her unborn baby. Her ribs were even crushed by the impact of the assault. Some reports state that a rope was tied around Imām ʿAlī's neck to force him to come to the Masjid and pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr![15] However, he continued to refuse to pay allegiance.

Soon after, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ passed away from the injuries she sustained from the attack in her home. Once more, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had to bury someone so dear and precious to him. The lady of light ﷺ asked her beloved husband to bury her in the darkness of the night, in secrecy, because of the injustices and oppression she had suffered from the nation. Up until now, her actual burial place is still unknown.

13 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon #3, famously known as *Khutbah ash-Shiqshiqiyyah*.
14 Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 6, P. 11.
15 al-Hilālī, Sulaym ibn Qays, *Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays*, Vol 2, P. 586; *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 15, P. 186.

DIVINELY-APPOINTED LEADERS

1. The Qurʾān clearly states that it is **Allah** ﷻ—**not the people**—who appoints a leader for the communities. Here are some examples:

And when His Lord tried Ibrāhīm with certain words, he fulfilled them. He (Allah) said: 'Indeed, I will make you an Imām (a leader) for the people…' [16]

And their Prophet said to them: 'Surely, Allah has deputed for you Ṭālūt as a King…' He said: 'Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you and has given him an abundance of knowledge and physical strength. And Allah gives sovereignty to whom He wills…' [17]

Therefore, the community of the Prophet ﷺ was bound by the command of Allah ﷻ to follow Imām ʿAlī ؑ.

2. Even if we assume that the leader should have been chosen through election, there were only a very limited number of people present at *Saqīfah*—less than one hundred. This is at a time when the number of Muslims was in the hundreds of thousands. Also, many important companions such as: Imām ʿAlī ؑ, Salmān, Abū Dharr, Miqdād, who had sacrificed **so much** for Islam were not even present at this gathering.

3. Finally, if the matter of leadership was to be resolved on the basis of consultation, then the Prophet of Islam ﷺ would certainly have explained this before his death the way it should have been done. Is it possible that the Prophet ﷺ explained so many minor issues in detail—such as how to go to the bathroom, or when and how to cut one's nails—but he made no mention of a great matter like who his successor would be after his death, or who should lead the nation?

16 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 124.
17 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 247.

IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ DURING THE REIGN OF THE THREE CALIPHS

From the time of the martyrdom of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ in 11 AH, until the time when people rushed to Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to beg him to take over the Caliphate in 36 AH, the Imām ﷺ continued to endure a very difficult time. During the initial months after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ dedicated himself to the Noble Qurʾān. He had been the main scribe of the Qurʾān during the lifetime of the final Messenger ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ taught Imām ʿAlī ﷺ every single verse *(āyah)* of the Qurʾān, including the sequence of the *sūrahs* and the *āyāt*, as well as the interpretation and inner meanings of each verse. In those first few months, the Imām ﷺ dedicated himself to recording all of these teachings, and ensuring that the Qurʾān would be protected forever.

In the years that followed, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ did whatever he could to protect Islam and the Muslims, however, without ever engaging in any form of support for the unqualified leaders.

Some of his contributions included:

- Correcting errors in the Islamic rulings or judgments by the caliphs. For example, when a woman who had an intellectual disability was going to be punished for a crime, the Imām ﷺ intervened to protect her because such people are not responsible for their crimes due to their mental instability.
- Whenever a problem came up for the caliphs that they did not know how to solve, they would turn to Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, who never turned them away, and would help them solve their problems because he knew that it was for the benefit of the Muslims. Abū Bakr once said: "May Allah never put me in a situation where I do not have access to Abūl Ḥasan to solve a problem." [18] Abū Bakr was the caliph for only three years before he died. After him, he appointed ʿUmar to take on this position. During his caliphate, ʿUmar said at least seventy times:

> "If ʿAlī had not been there, ʿUmar would have perished." [19]

- Giving strategic advice and guidance when it came to defending Islam and the Muslims, and their lands from the enemies.
- Speaking out and giving advice to the caliphs when they were acting in an unjust manner, such as when he advised and reprimanded the third caliph in regard to his nepotism and favoring his own family and personal friends over others.

18 Ḥanbal, Aḥmad ibn, *Faḍāil al-Ṣaḥābah*, Vol. 2, P. 647, Tradition #1100. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

19 al-Athīr, ʿAlī ibn, *Al-Isrīʾāb fī Maʿrifat al-Aṣḥāb*, Vol. 3, P. 1103. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

THE REIGN OF THE THIRD CALIPH

After ʿUmar passed away, the caliphate was then given to ʿUthmān in a very peculiar way. ʿUthmān had bad advisors, and thus did not have good strategies or sound political judgment. For example, he appointed his own family members to government positions, although they were corrupt and unqualified. Specifically, he allowed his cousin, Muʿāwiyah, to remain as governor of Shām (modern-day Syria), who then built a major power base there. Slowly, the people's anger toward his corruption rose, until finally, it led to the assassination of ʿUthmān by a group of people who had become frustrated with his governance.

PEOPLE THEN TURNED TO IMĀM ʿALĪ ﷺ

After the death of ʿUthmān, people went and pleaded to Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to become the next caliph, however, he did not accept this right away. He knew that after so many years of corruption, it would be hard to rule justly and Islamically. Thus, he wanted to make sure that the people knew exactly what they were asking for.

There were so many people who came to beg Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to take the position of the caliphate that Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ were scared that they would be trampled upon. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ described the event as saying: "They came in like thirsty camels who had finally found their water."

Finally, after continuous insistence from the people, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ accepted the position. However, he made it very clear that he was only taking the caliphate as a responsibility upon him, not out of his own desire. He said in one of his sermons that: "This world is less valuable to me than the sneeze of a goat." [20] He did not want the caliphate for the sake of greed or a thirst for power like those who took it away from him in the first place. He knew that people needed to be guided Islamically, politically, and socially, by a just leader.[21]

Therefore, he started a government with justice, but because the people had fallen into a love of material gains and striving for this world over the Hereafter, he spent much of his time as caliph in war. This was the beginning of the outward animosity toward all of our Imāms ﷺ, and every one of them until the 11th Imām ﷺ was martyred because of this same reason.

Painting by: Hassan RouholAmin

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ accepted the caliphate as a responsibility upon him, not for greed or power. The people needed to be guided Islamically, politically, and socially, by a just leader.

20 *Nahj al-Balāghāh*, Sermon #1.

21 *Nahj al-Balāghāh*, Sermon #3.

Activity 2.1a: Venn Diagram

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said on the Day of Ghadīr: **"Whoever I am the master (mawlā) of, ʿAlī is his master (mawlā)."** In previous years, we learned that other Schools of Thought define the word *"mawlā"* as friend instead of leader or master.

Based on evidence from this lesson, complete the Venn diagram below, exploring the similarities and differences between a friend, and a leader or master, then answer the questions that follow.

Stop and Reflect:

1. Knowing the events that took place at Ghadīr Khumm, why does the meaning "friend" not make sense?

Activity 2.1b: Review Questions

1. How can you prove that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ is the true successor to the Prophet ﷺ?

2. After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, why was Imām ʿAlī ﷺ not given his rightful position?

3. What occurred just before the death of the Prophet ﷺ, and why was this a great tragedy for the Muslim nation?

Activity 2.1b: Review Questions (continued)

4. How does the Event at Ghadīr Khumm prove the legitimate leadership of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ as the Divinely-appointed successor to the final Prophet ﷺ?

5. What happened when the first caliph sent men to Imām ʿAlī's door to demand his allegiance?

6. Find and write down one Qurʾānic example that states how Allah ﷻ appointed a leader for a community of believers.

2.2 Sayyidah Fāṭimah's Last Months

OBJECTIVES

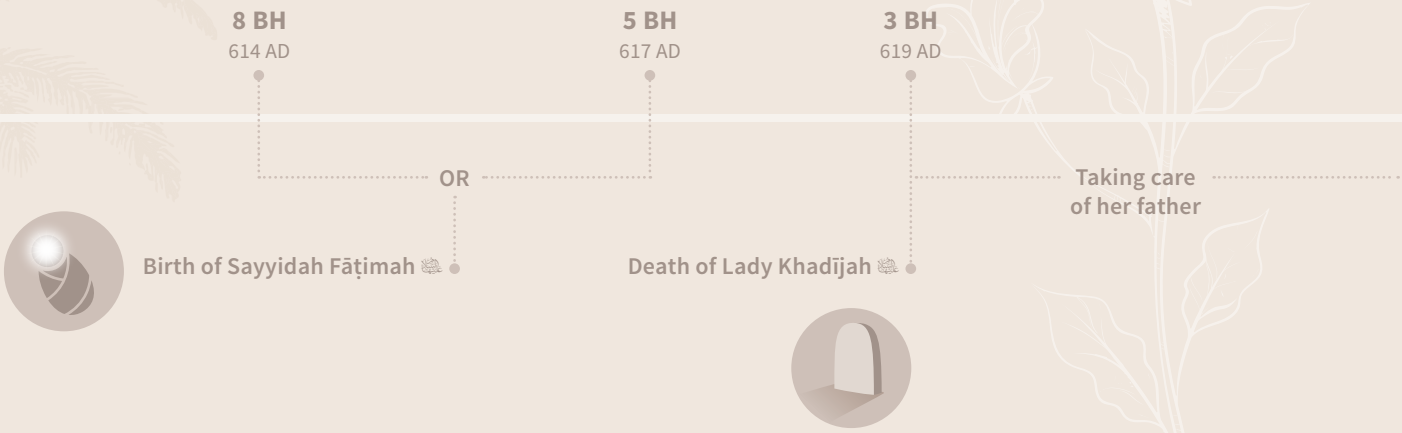
WE WILL:

- Demonstrate how Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ upheld and defended *wilāyah* after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Understand the history behind the land of Fadak.
- Review the sermon of Fadak and why it has an important role, even until today.
- Learn the history that ultimately lead to the tragic death of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ.

AN OVERVIEW OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ

Name	Fāṭimah ﷺ bint Muḥammad ﷺ
Kunyah	Umm Abīhā (Mother of her father); Ummul A'immah (Mother of the 11 Imāms)
Title	Az-Zahrā' (the radiant one, or a flower); Al-Batūl
Parents	Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and Lady Khadījah bint Khuwaylid ﷺ
Date of Birth	20th Jumādā al-Ākhirah 5 or 8 BH
Birthplace	Mecca, Arabia
Number of Children	5 (3 sons and 2 daughters)
Date of Martyrdom	13th Jumādā al-Ūlā 11 AH, or 3rd Jumādā al-Ākhirah 11 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Medina, Arabia
Cause of Martyrdom	Struck by a burning door and inflicted with other injuries
Lifespan	18 Years
Location of Grave	Medina (exact location is unknown), Arabia

TIMELINE OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ



THE NOBLE PROPHET'S DEATH

The death of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was very difficult for those who were close to him, especially for his family. Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ and Imām ʿAlī ؑ were with him until his final moments in this world, but there were many who sought power for themselves during this time.

Deep down, people knew that the Divine guide appointed by Allah ﷻ after Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was Imām ʿAlī ؑ, as we learned in previous lessons and grades. His *wilāyah*—or guardianship—was meant to be for all of the Muslims, the same way the *wilāyah* of the Prophet ﷺ was for all Muslims. This was because he was *maʿṣum*, or immaculate, and made the best decisions according to the will of Allah ﷻ in every situation.

As Imām ʿAlī ؑ performed the funeral rights on the Noble Prophet ﷺ, there were many men who had gathered in a secret place to decide who would be the successor of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, even though very well they knew that it was supposed to be Imām ʿAlī ؑ. They made excuses for why he was not fit to lead, one being that he was young, so they decided that Abū Bakr would be caliph.

It was after this time, that Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ would leave her home to remind the people that Imām ʿAlī ؑ was the rightful Imām and successor of the final Prophet ﷺ. She knew that this is what Allah ﷻ wanted. Imām ʿAlī ؑ was the most perfect man on Earth at that time. He was the only person who could lead people with true justice, and he was chosen by Allah ﷻ to lead the Muslims and rule with fairness, equity, and mercy.

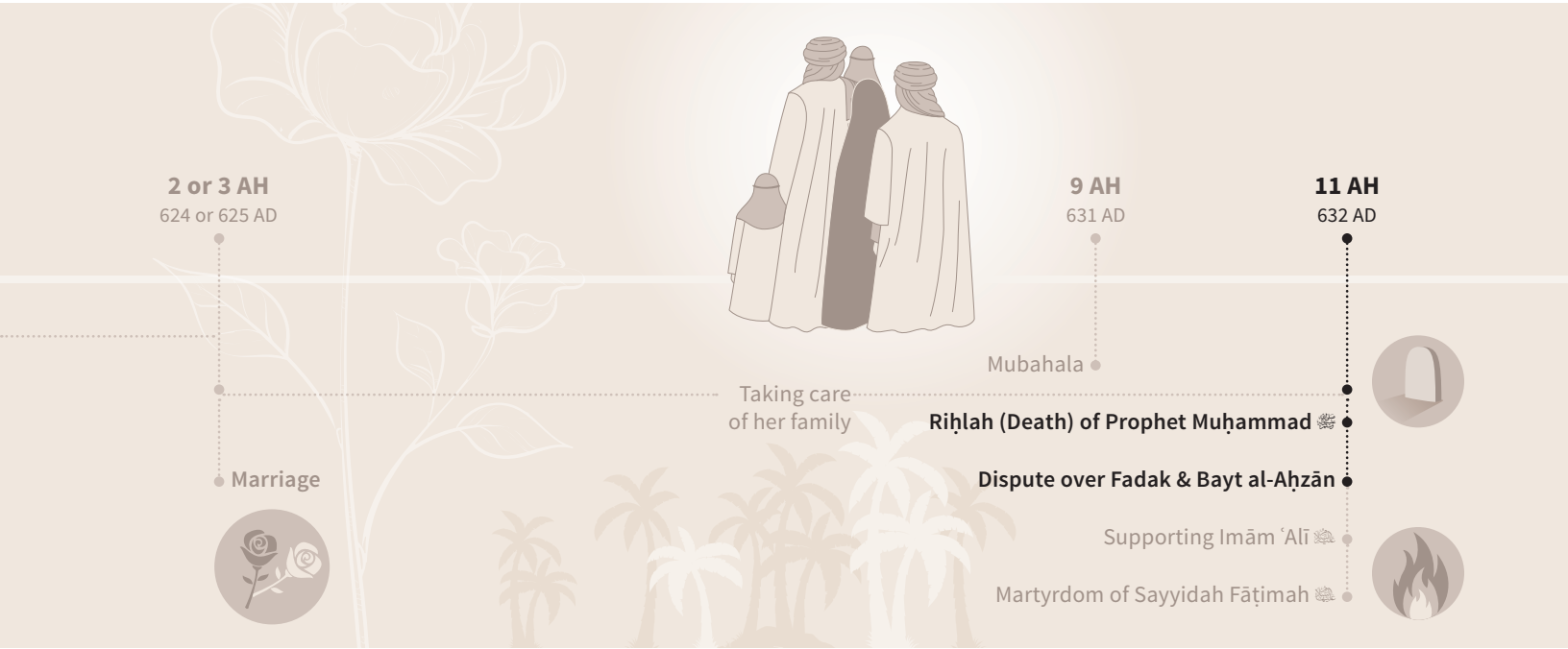
STOP AND REFLECT: What is the definition of *wilāyah*? How do you think Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ defended *wilāyah* during her time?

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ was the first defender of *wilāyah*. She never faulted in defending *Imāmah* and unveiling the truth especially after the death of the Prophet ﷺ. Even in defending her own rights to Fadak (a piece of land which was gifted to her by her father during his lifetime), her main aim was to defend her husband and his God-given rights. Tragically, this defence of hers was one of the many reasons, in addition to Imām ʿAlī ؑ not giving his allegiance to the unjustly appointed caliph, that eventually led to her being attacked in her own home, losing the baby in her stomach, and being martyred as a result of her brutal injuries. Her anger with her attackers and those who usurped the Imām's rights led her to request her beloved husband to bury her in the darkness of the night, so that those who angered her could not attend her funeral or pray over her body.

THE SERMON OF FADAK

During the Battle of *Khaybar*, the land of Fadak was surrendered peacefully and voluntarily to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. It thus became his personal property, **not** spoils of war to be distributed among his troops. He later gave it to Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ as a gift,[1] in accordance with the Divine command.

1 Suyūṭī, *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr*, Vol. 2, P. 158.



When Abū Bakr became the caliph and took charge of the government of the Muslims, one of his first acts was to forcibly take possession of Fadak. He evicted the caretakers from this land, and also confiscated the property that Sayyidah Fāṭimah's father had given to her in Medina itself. This was a tactic used to take away any source of wealth that the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ had in order to weaken Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. Abū Bakr then even refused to accept the truthfulness of the claim that Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ had for Fadak, and the reason for this was because he knew that if he accepted that claim, then he would also have been forced to give in to the truthfulness of her claims in support of the *Imāmah* of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. By taking away the land of Fadak, the goal was to completely sideline the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in every possible way and try to reduce their status. We know that Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ never cared for any material possessions so fighting for Fadak was not for any worldly gains, rather the true intentions were for defending the *wilāyah*.

She first tried to resolve the issue with Abū Bakr privately. Abū Bakr claimed that he heard the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ say that the apostles do not have any heirs, and such wealth, property, or material goods as they possess in their lifetime, belong after their death—not to their children—but to the general people. In response to this, Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ explained that Fadak was not a bequest of her father, rather it was a gift from him during his lifetime because it was the property of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, thus he could give it whoever he wanted.

Abū Bakr then agreed to return Fadak to Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and gave his word in writing. However, ʿUmar, upon reading the document without permission, tore it apart in anger.[2] Thus Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, who ran the affairs of her home, came out and delivered the *Sermon of Fadak*. We see in the complete sermon that the majority of her speech was to remind people to follow Allah ﷻ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

Donning her cloak and full veil, and accompanied by some women of Banī Hāshim, she walked to the masjid wearing a dress that was long and modest, and walked with the exact demeanor of her father. She went to the Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ and sat behind a curtain from where she began with a very sorrowful sigh—by which all those who were present began to weep.

She began by praising Allah ﷻ:

> *Praise be to Allah for His bounties (upon us), and thanks be to Him for all that He inspired; and commended is His Name for all the bounties He created before our own creation; and for all the common bounties that He bestowed (upon us) from His Own Self without even (our) asking for them—abundant and complete bounties, such plenteous and unlimited bounties whose numbers cannot be computed, and thanks cannot be offered for the duration and commencement (of these bounties), and whose perpetuity is beyond comprehension.*

2 Ḥalabī, *Aṣ-Ṣīrāh al-Ḥalabīyyah*, Vol. 3, P. 512; Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 543.

Most of her sermon was not focused on Fadak, but on reminding people about the importance of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. She said in her sermon:

> *O people! Know that I am Fāṭimah, and my father was Muḥammad. I say, and I will repeat this again and again, and I do not utter any falsehood, and whatever I do shall not be wrong.* ***'Indeed, an Apostle from among yourselves came to you, and grievous to him is your falling into distress, (he is) concerned regarding you (your welfare and guidance), and toward the believers (he is) compassionate, (and) merciful'*** *[Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tawbah (9), Verse 128]. If you look and understand, you will find that this Apostle was my father—not the father of any one of your women; and he was the brother of my cousin [Imām ʿAlī ﷺ]—not the brother of any one of your men; and how fortunate is the one related to him [the Prophet ﷺ]."* [3]

"O people! Know that I am Fāṭimah, and my father was Muḥammad.... I do not utter any falsehood, and whatever I do shall not be wrong."

– Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ continued, further reminding those present about the merits of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, where she said:

> *Then Allah, the Almighty, rescued you through Muḥammad, after all these calamities and after suffering at the hands of barbarians, the wolfish Arabs, and the rebellious People of the Book.* ***'Whenever they ignited the flame of war, Allah extinguished it'*** *[Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 64].*

She went on:

> *Whenever the horn of Shayṭān appeared, or the polytheist's mouth opened [in defiance], he would dispatch his brother [Imām ʿAlī ﷺ] into its midst and he would not return until he had trampled on its ear with the soles of his feet, and put out its blaze with his sword. He strove for the sake of Allah and struggled in His way. He was close to the Prophet of Allah, a leader among the close friends (awliyāʾ) of Allah, always prepared and diligent, sincere, earnest, and hardworking—never fearing the reproach of any reproacher. Meanwhile, you were living lives of ease and comfort, relaxed, unperturbed and secure, awaiting the reversal of our fortunes, keenly waiting for news [of our failures], retreating during conflict and fleeing from battle.*

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

How might the content of this sermon have been different if the dispute was about material wealth? Discuss this with a partner. Come up with a list of at least five points. Be prepared to share with the class, and write down some points that others thought of that differ from yours.

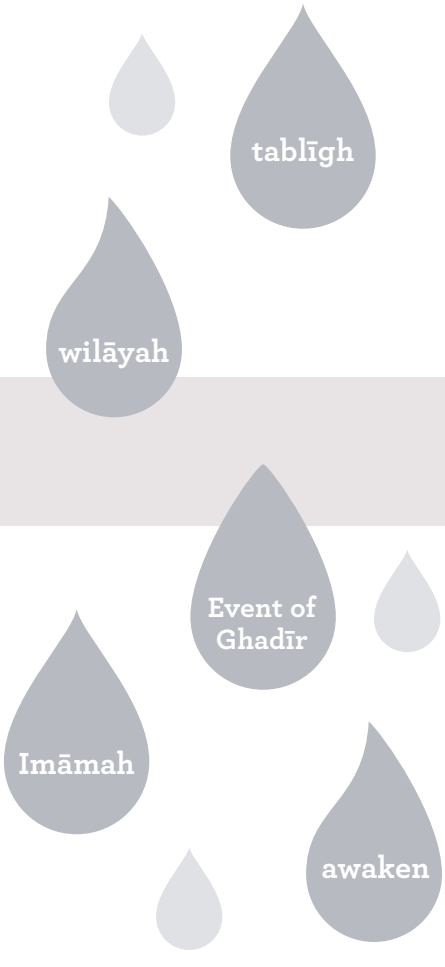
3 *The Historic Fadak Sermon of Fatimah*. (2021, October 29). Retrieved May 20, 2022, from https://www.al-islam.org/fatimiyyah-ashura-lutfullah-safi-golpaygani/historic-fadak-sermon-fatimah#f_9a75db65_18

BAYTUL AḤZĀN

Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ used to visit the tomb of her father which was next to her house, take a handful of the dirt from his grave, smell it, and weep profusely. She would then return back to her house and continue weeping day and night. Her lamentation did not subside, nor did the flow of tears ever end.

TABLĪGH: propagation

Despite her hardships, she continued her efforts of propagation[4]—calling people to the true path of Islam. She held lectures teaching people about the concept of *wilāyah*, knocking on door to door reminding people about the message of the Prophet ﷺ. However, such practical reminding and propagation did not work in her time, thus she would complain to Allah ﷻ about the loss of the true religion and the absolute truth. She would talk to Allah ﷻ about the injustices she saw being done to the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and the cruelty of so-called Muslim leaders. In many of her *duʿās,* she would profusely be in tears.



A group of the elders of Medina came to the Commander of the Faithful—Imām ʿAlī ﷺ—and complained to him: "Fāṭimah weeps day and night! We cannot sleep at night due to it, and we cannot find respite during the day. We want you to tell Fāṭimah to either weep at night and remain silent during the day, or weep during the day and remain silent at night." Imām ʿAlī ﷺ replied: "I shall convey your message to her with due respect."

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ came to Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and saw her engrossed in immense sorrow. When her sight fell upon him, she became calm. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: "The elders of Medina have requested me to ask you to either weep at night or during the day."

Fāṭimah ﷺ replied: "O Abūl Ḥasan! My life among these people is very short, and soon I will be departing. By Allah! I shall weep constantly until I unite with my father, the Prophet of Allah."

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: "You are at liberty, you may do as you wish."

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ then built a house for Fāṭimah ﷺ in the cemetery of *al-Baqīʿ*, far away from the houses of the people, and he named it *'Baytul Aḥzān'* (The House of Sorrows). Everyday, Fāṭimah ﷺ would send her children, Ḥasan ﷺ and Ḥusayn ﷺ, before her to *al-Baqīʿ* and then she would proceed toward it, weeping. She would then sit and weep among the graves, and when night would fall, Imām 'Alī ﷺ would come and take them back home.[5]

Through these tears, she was doing another form of propagation *(tablīgh)*. By the tears flowing down her face, she was able to have the people see and know that many injustices were being done against them. People would feel guilty, but they did not want to change their ways, and finally made the excuse that they could not sleep at night due to her lamenting and crying. By building *Baytul Aḥzān* and her going there to mourn, she was continuing her efforts to try and awaken the people as eventually they would ask: *What is this place, and why did Sayyidah Faṭīmah ﷺ cry so much?* She was invoking their innate nature and aspiring to guide them to the truth.

4 In Arabic, this is commonly known as *tablīgh.*
5 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 43, P. 177.

FIRE AT THE DOOR OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH ﷺ

The end of Sayyidah Fāṭimah's life was filled with intense grief and sorrow. She could see that the religion of her father was being subjected to change, and none of her and her husband's efforts were effective in alerting the people and setting them in the right direction. After that, she became more keen to reunite with her father and became more restless in this world.

When Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ saw that the people were abandoning the message of the Prophet ﷺ, she left from home under the shade of the night with Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and her two young sons, Ḥasan ﷺ and Ḥusayn ﷺ. This was very unusual for Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, but she did this because she knew the importance of *Imāmah*. She went knocking from door to door, asking the people to remember the pledge that they made in the Event of Ghadīr—that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was the true successor of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

When Imām ʿAlī ﷺ saw the disloyalty of the people and perceived that they were seeking excuses in order to not assist him, and were gathering around Abū Bakr, he settled into his house and did not come out. ʿUmar said to Abū Bakr: "Why do you not send a message to ʿAlī to come and pay allegiance at your hands? Everyone has sworn allegiance except him and four others."

The day arrived, and ʿUmar came with other supporters of Abū Bakr because they were angered that Imām ʿAlī ﷺ had not given his allegiance yet. They wanted to force Imām ʿAlī ﷺ to give allegiance to Abū Bakr by forcing him out of his house.

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and Imām ʿAlī ﷺ were aware of why these people came to them in the middle of the night. Fāṭimah ﷺ knew that they had come to her home so that if Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was killed, they could conjure up stories about the nature of his death. She also knew that if Imām ʿAlī ﷺ were to use his strength against them, the people would have made up incorrect lies as well. This is why—although Imām ʿAlī ﷺ was a fierce lion in the battlefield—he was forced to restrain in this case as advised by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Knowing this, she answered the door.

The daughter of the Prophet ﷺ spent most of her time building a life in this home. In this very home, ʿUmar and the other men set fire to the door, and Fāṭimah ﷺ became crushed behind it and the wall as they forcefully entered, killing her unborn baby Muḥsin. She became very ill as a result of this brutal attack, and remained on her deathbed for only a few days.[6]

6 This has been narrated in many Ahlus Sunnah books including *Al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusī; *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī*; *Ansāb al-Ashrāf; Al-Muṣannaf*, and *Al-Imāmah wa as-Siyāsah.*

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

ʿUmar, ignoring the cries of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ, asked for a torch and burned down the door. Discuss with a partner how this proves that truth is with the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Be prepared to discuss your thoughts with the class.

Umm Salāmah, one of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, came to visit Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ and said: "O daughter of the Prophet of Allah! How did you begin the day with this illness of yours?"

Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ replied:

I began the day seeing myself between two sorrows. My heart has turned into a cloth of blood due to the sorrow of separation from my father; and my heart is ablazed after witnessing the oppression meted out to the vicegerent of the Prophet of Allah. By Allah! They disrespected the noble presence of the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī, and he entered into the morning in a manner that the position of caliphate was snatched away from him. They opposed the Book of Allah and the traditions of the Prophet. The motive of their deviation is that their hearts are full of envy and enmity toward ʿAlī, for he had killed their men in the Battles of Badr and Uḥud. Thus, they quelled the flames of rancor and envy by taking revenge upon ʿAlī by usurping his rights… [7]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, create a Venn Diagram contrasting how these oppressors entered her home, and how her own family members entered her home in the Event of the Cloak *(Ḥadīthul Kisā)*. Is there anything in the middle, or is it a complete contrast? Explain.

7 Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, Vol. 2, P. 205.

THE MARTYRDOM OF SAYYIDAH FĀṬIMAH

On Monday, the 3rd of Jumādā al-Ākhirah[8] in the 11th year after the migration *(Ḥijrah)*, she passed away, in the same year as her father. Her children were all under the age of seven years old, with Imām Ḥasan being the oldest.

Imām ʿAlī, according to Sayyidah Fāṭimah's last will, performed her funeral rights and buried her in the darkness of the night. Her grave was kept completely secret so nobody could know where she was buried.[9]

Up until now, the exact place of her burial is still unknown and hidden. This was her wish, and it was intended to show that the daughter of the Prophet was mistreated, made angry, and left this world while she was unhappy with the people. It is also related to an earlier lesson where we mentioned that Sayyidah Fāṭimah represents the Attribute of Allah of being hidden—even in her death. It is said that when we do the *ziyārah* of the sister of Imām ar-Riḍāʾ, Lady Fāṭimāh Maʿṣumah, it is like we are doing the *ziyārah* of Sayyidah Fāṭimah.[10]

After Sayyidah Fāṭimah passed away, Imām ʿAlī and the children became heartbroken. Imām ʿAlī sat by her grave and repeated a few sentences in a low voice; then he faced the grave of the Prophet and said: "O Prophet! The trust (Fāṭimah) that you had bestowed me with has been returned to you, but my sorrow has become everlasting. I will spend my nights sleepless, until I too am united with (both of) you. Very soon, your daughter will relate to you how the nation united to oppress us, and you may ask her (how this occurred) when a very short period of time had elapsed after your passing such that your remembrance had not even been forgotten…" [11]

Painting by: Hassan RouholAmin

Imām ʿAlī also said:

"After the departure of Fāṭimah, there is no companion left for me." [1]

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon #193.

Sayyidah Fāṭimāh suffered many hardships and sorrows in her life—from the death of her father to the everlasting sorrow of her children in her tragic passing. However, she will always be a source and light of guidance for all people, especially Muslims, and our first lesson in support of *wilāyah*. She spent her entire life, particularly after the death of the Prophet, propagating the religion (doing *tablīgh)* in different forms and guiding people to true Islam.

8 There are some different dates that have been mentioned for her actual death date.
9 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 78, P. 310.
10 Āyatullāh Sayyid Maḥmood Marʿashī, father of Āyatullāh Marʿashī Najafī, was well-known to have narrated this.
11 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon #193.

Activity 2.2a: Has History Taught Us Anything?

Create a graphic organizer to compare the way Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﵄ was treated versus the people who are oppressed in our society today. The first one is completed for you as an example. When you are finished with the graphic organizer, write a one paragraph summary of your findings.

Treatment of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﵄	Treatment of Minorities Today	Evidence	Comparisons
Burning of the door of her home	Demolishment of homes	Israeli forces in Palestine	Same as the time of the Ahlul Bayt ﵄

Activity 2.2b: Review Questions

1. In your own words, summarize the short life of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ.

2. In your own words, summarize about the land of Fadak. Where did Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ get this land from, and why did she have to defend it?

3. How did Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ defend *wilāyah* from the time of the Prophet's death until the end of her own life?

4. What is the correlation of the Sermon of Fadak to *wilāyah*?

5. Why is Sayyidah Fāṭimah's burial place unknown even until this day?

2.3 Imām Ḥasan's Life: Peace Treaty to Martyrdom

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

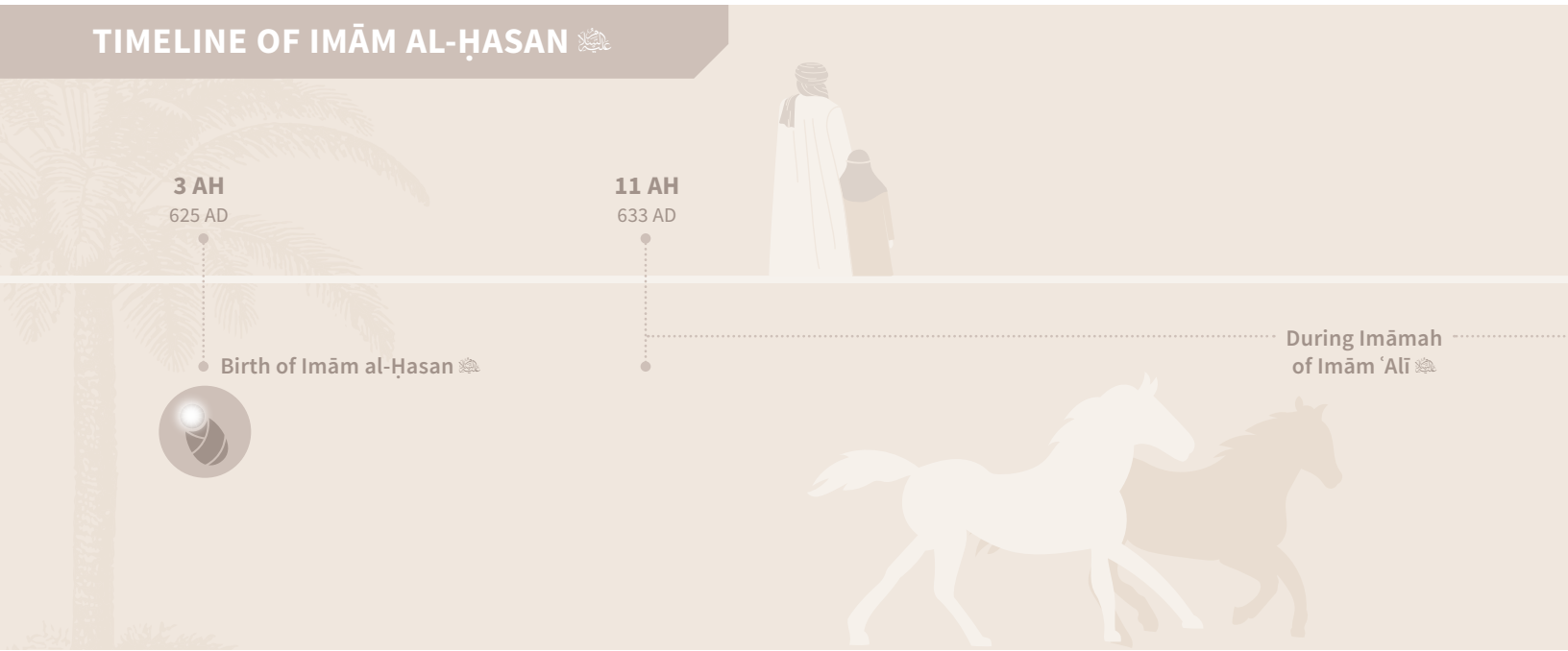
- Learn about the importance of not judging others.
- Understand the historical events surrounding Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.
- Demonstrate how Muʿāwiyah was an evil and unjust ruler.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤASAN ﷺ

Name	Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ
Kunyah	Abū Muḥammad
Title	Al-Mujtabā (The Chosen One)
Parents	Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ
Date of Birth	15th of the month of Ramaḍan, 3 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imāmah	10 years
Date of Martyrdom	28th Ṣafar, 50 AH; (7th Ṣafar, based on some scholars)[1]
Place of Martyrdom	Medina, Arabia
Cause of Martyrdom	Poisoned by his wife Jaʿdah (upon the order of Muʿāwiyah)
Lifespan	47 Years
Location of Grave	Jannatul Baqīʿ in Medina, Arabia

1 Shahīd al-Awwal, *Ad-Durūs ash-Sharʿīyyah*, Vol. 2, P. 7.

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ḤASAN ﷺ



Though the era after the death of the Prophet ﷺ was followed by eager expansion and conquest in the Islamic world (under false rulers), Imām Ḥasan ؑ devoted himself to peacefully spreading Islam and the teachings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Imamate of Imām Ḥasan ؑ, however, was met with challenges from Muʿāwiyah very early on. In order to protect the core of true Islam and its true followers, Imām Ḥasan ؑ entered into a Peace Treaty with Muʿāwiyah as willed by Allah ﷻ. Muʿāwiyah, soon after the Treaty was signed, violated the conditions of it. His first move was to go to Kūfah and obtain allegiance from the people. There he addressed the people—exposing his inner evilness and disloyalty toward Islam—by saying to them: "O people! There was no nation which had differences after the passing of their Prophets, except that the people of falsehood won." He immediately realized that he had said something wrong because he admitted that he was on the side of falsehood as well. So, he quickly added: "Except this nation."

He also told the people: "By Allah, I have not fought against you so that you pray, fast, perform Ḥajj, or pay zakāh. Surely, you already do that. I fought so that I can rule over you just as Allah has ordained, but all of you did not obey Him. I gave Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī the things he asked for, but now all of them are under my foot, and from now on, I will not fulfill anything [meaning that whatever was signed in the Peace Treaty, he will not abide by it]." He then went on to curse Imām ʿAlī ؑ in front of Imām Ḥasan ؑ and Imām Ḥusayn ؑ.

At this point, Imām Ḥasan ؑ rose to speak. He said: "May Allah curse the one who tries to ruin our reputation or diminish our honor. You curse our lineage, yet you are the one who has been ahead of us in disbelief and hypocrisy."[1]

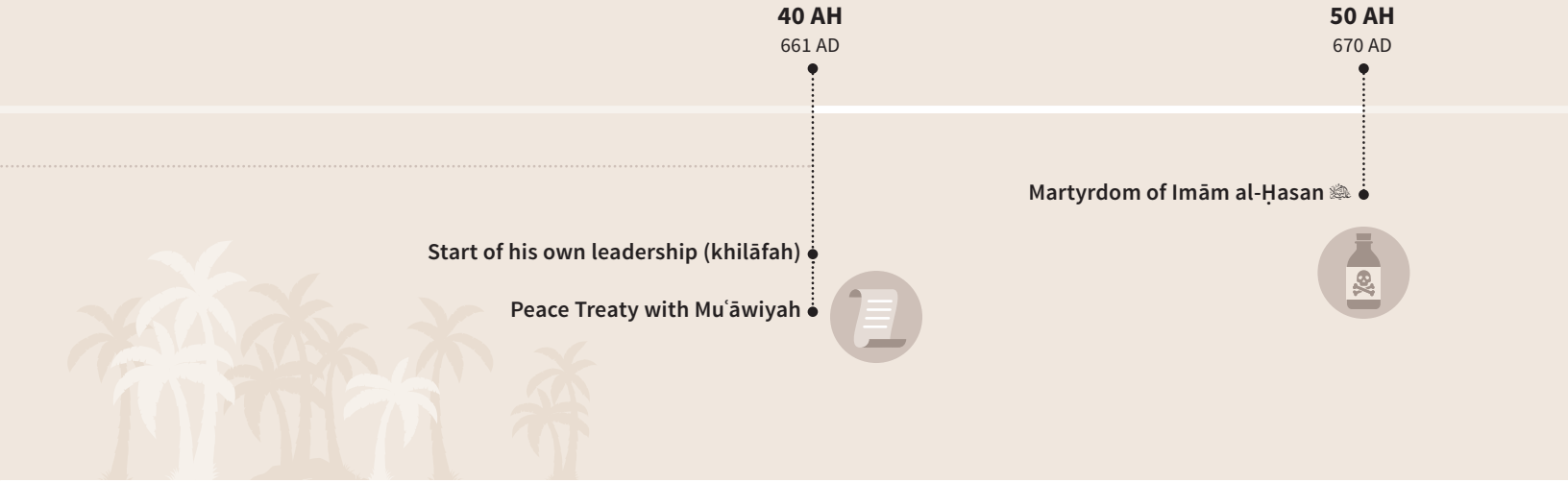
Muʿāwiyah became very nervous and angry because he had tried to hide who the Imām ؑ was from the Syrian people (who had accompanied him to Kūfah). He kept trying to interrupt, but the Imām ؑ kept speaking the truth. One of his advisors commented: "Regardless of your wealth and power, it is not possible to hide his merits from the people."[2]

We can see from this one instance that even people who knew Imām Ḥasan ؑ was the rightful leader supported Muʿāwiyah because he gave special privileges. Muʿāwiyah was very tactful and cunning, so people did not realize how oppressive he could be as a leader.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner think of how and when Muslims today disregard the wisdom and advice of the scholars *(ʿulamā')*. How does this relate to the Imāms ؑ? Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

1 Irbilī, ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā, *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Maʿrifat al-Aʾimmah*, Vol. 2, P. 150.
2 Paraphrased from the book, *Al-Iḥtijāj,* by Abū Manṣūr Ṭabarsī, Vol. 1, P. 281.



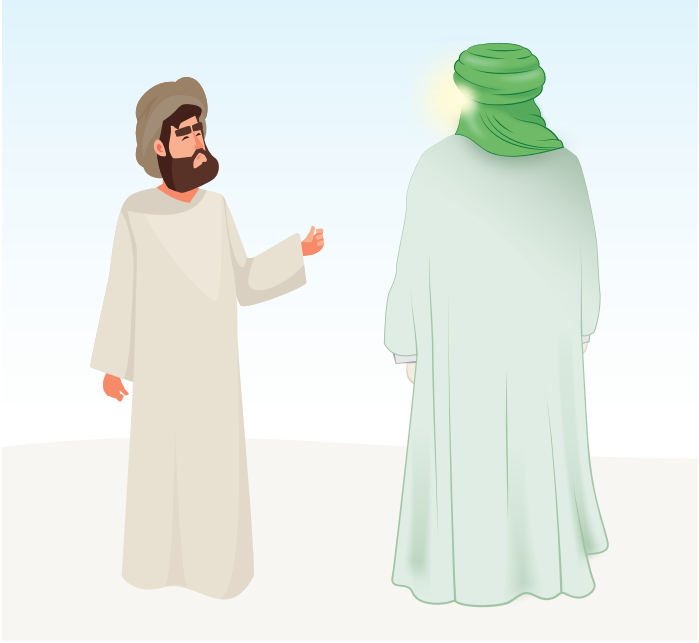
RELOCATION TO MEDINA

After the Peace Treaty was signed, the 2nd Imām ﷺ packed up his belongings and moved back to his hometown, Medina, along with his family. Muʿāwiyah had stipulated in the Treaty that Imām Ḥasan ﷺ had to leave from Kūfah because this was the city of his father, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, and people still remembered and had respect for the first Imām ﷺ. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ had agreed to this because he knew that there were two groups of people in Kūfah: Those who wanted to take revenge on Muʿāwiyah (which would end up causing a lot of disunity); and those who were outright hypocrites *(munāfiqīn)*. These hypocrites only pretended to be on the side of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ. Even the close companions of our 2nd Imām ﷺ could see that his staying in Kūfah would only cause problems, so they too encouraged him to go back to Medina.

In Medina, the Imām ﷺ remained steadfast and patient for the sake of Allah ﷻ even though he had been severely wronged. He continued worshiping the Almighty, guiding people toward Islam, teaching the Noble Qurʿān, protecting Islam, defending the Muslims, and being available for personal matters—even to his enemies. Many people would come visit him for advice or answers to their questions. He also had an agriculture business that he used to support his family, so he would spend time in the fields.[3]

These ten years of being the Imām were very difficult for him. On one hand, there were enemies from the side of the government, and Muʿāwiyah in particular; and on the other hand, many people who had not wanted him to sign the Peace Treaty also turned into his enemies. They were very weak in faith and doubted the Imām ﷺ, even though they knew that the decisions of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ were for the best. Further to this, he even had an enemy in his own home—his wife, Jaʿdah bint al-Ashʿath.

People did not want to associate with the Imām ﷺ at all. He could not even leave his home without being accompanied by some faithful companions because people would try to hurt him.



Muʿāwiyah also encouraged and sent Syrians to come and disrespect the Imām ﷺ. One day, the Imām ﷺ came across a man from Syria. The man began insulting the Imām ﷺ—who remained silent until the man stopped swearing. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ greeted him kindly, then said:

"O man! I think you are a stranger and are mistaken about me. If you seek my forgiveness, then I will forgive you. If you need something, then I will give it to you. If you want to be guided, then I will guide you. If you do not have an animal to ride, then I will provide you with one. If you are hungry, then I will give you food. If you do not have clothing, then I will clothe you. If you are poor, then I will make you needless. If you are homeless, then I will shelter you. If you want to bring your luggage to my house, then I will be very glad to host you—my house is large and furnished."

When the Syrian man heard this, he began crying: "I swear that you are Allah's representative on this Earth! 'Allah knows best where (and how) to carry out His mission.'[4] You and your father were the most hated people to me before, but now you are my most beloved ones!"[5] The man then came to Imām Ḥasan's house, stayed there, and became one of his sincere companions.

This is a moral lesson we learn from the Noble Qurʾān, and the actions of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. We should try our best to ward off evil with goodness—especially within our own interactions. In most personal matters, we should be kind, merciful, and let things go—as long as doing so will not encourage further evil.

3 *Hawzah.net*. (n.d.). Economic lifestyle of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ. Retrieved May 3, 2023, from https://hawzah.net/fa/Article/View/97125/"سبک-زندگی-اقتصادی-امام-حسن-ع"

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnʿām (6), Verse 124.

5 Irbilī, ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā, *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Maʿrifat al-Aʾimmah*, Vol. 1, P. 561.

There is another instance where the Imām ﷺ was being harassed by a Syrian man who had fallen for Muʿāwiyah's propaganda. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ was walking along with a group of his family members. A supporter of the Banī Umayyah from Syria saw them and asked: "Who are those people who are coming?" Someone responded: "It is Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī." The man went toward Imām Ḥasan ﷺ and asked him: "Are you Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī?" The Imām ﷺ replied: "Yes, I am." The man then said: "Would you like God to make you enter the fire of Hell, the same way he made your father enter into it?" Imām Ḥasan ﷺ responded: "Woe be to you! How can you say such a thing, when my father achieved such a great status?" The man retorted: "May God give you the same fate as him, for he is an infidel, and so are you!" One of the Imām's companions came from behind the Imām ﷺ and hit the man so hard that he fell to the ground. Immediately, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ spread his cloak over him, and asked his companions to go to the masjid and pray for him. This was a sign of the Imām's magnanimity, because at that time, the cloak was considered to be the mark of a man's respect and dignity, and held more significance than the clothes a man wore. The Imām ﷺ took the man's hand and escorted him to his house, clothed him with a new pair of clothes, then left him (to rest).[6]

The Imām's primary tool in changing the hearts of the people were his good manners and behavior (akhlāq)

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Ponder over the story of the first man who only knew what he had heard about Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, but then realized how mistaken he was. Think of an instance where you may have misjudged someone based on what you had heard about them. With your partner, come up with some solutions on how to solve the issue of judging others based on hearsay. Be prepared to share your situation and solutions with the class.

The Imām's primary tool in changing the hearts of the people were his good manners and behavior *(akhlāq)*. This can be a lesson for us when dealing with people in our own lives—to be merciful in our personal interactions with others. Imām Ḥasan ﷺ had the wisdom to know that these men had sincerity in their hearts; and following his example, we should also assume the best in other Muslims.

Not judging others needs to be displayed in our actions. When we give other Muslims the benefit of the doubt, especially if we have never met them in person, we are showing our own good character and values. To judge someone based on what others say about them is not allowed in Islam. An individual might have made a mistake, then repented for that sin, but some people in the community may continually discuss that past sin even to people who never knew about that issue ever before. Only Allah ﷻ knows what is in the hearts of individuals, and only He has the right to judge people. Our duty—especially as Muslims—is to show kindness and respect to all people by default. If others have wronged us, we should forgive them and do our best to move on, and not share this knowledge with others, or make their mistakes public. Just as Imām Ḥasan ﷺ beautifully taught us, we should ward off evil with goodness.

6 *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* by Ibn Saʿd, P. 149.

MUʿĀWIYAH AS THE CALIPH

Just as Imām Ḥasan ﷺ had warned, Muʿāwiyah did not honor any of the conditions of the Treaty. In fact, now that he had additional power and authority, he intensified his cruelty and oppression against the people. He completely disregarded Imām Ḥasan ﷺ, and did not give him any access to the public treasury. Instead, he secretly took large amounts of money from it and used it for his own benefit and to bribe people.

Muʿāwiyah was still afraid of Imām Ḥasan's popularity and good character, and would create false accusations of bribery against him. However, the Imām ﷺ was always kind to everyone and very generous to the poor, so people's hearts began to turn toward him.

Additionally, Muʿāwiyah continued to curse Imām ʿAlī ﷺ from the *minbar*. He did everything in his power to make life difficult for the family and companions of Imām ʿAlī ﷺ. He tortured and killed many of his companions. Although many of the companions laid low and some of them even went into hiding, Muʿāwiyah and his governors would seek these people out and issue public torture. This torture included cutting off their hands and feet, and even hanging them from trees in some instances. One morning, a man who was appointed as a representative by Muʿāwiyah killed 47 *ḥāfiẓ*[7] of the Noble Qurʾān.[8]

It reached a point where the Shīʿahs were persecuted so much that they were either in prison, in hiding, or living in very difficult conditions.

The people thought that they would get a break once Muʿāwiyah became caliph and they would not have to fight anymore, but it was the exact opposite which transpired.

People soon became aware of how evil Muʿāwiyah truly was, and realized that they had made a grievous mistake. They began regretting the fact that they turned against their Imām ﷺ. This awakening reached a peak when Muʿāwiyah's men killed a very loyal and loved companion named Ḥujr ibn ʿAdī.

7 *Ḥāfiẓ* literally means 'to preserve,' 'to look after,' or 'to safeguard,' and in this case it refers to 'a person who safeguards the Qurʾān by having memorized it.'

8 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī,* Vol. 5, P. 237. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

Muʿāwiyah was clever and cunning in how he presented himself to the people. He was a grave sinner in private, but did not sin in public. He even gave his government the color of Islam; he was politically very savvy. He had been spreading so many lies about the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ since the time of Imām ʻAlī ﷺ to the extent that some of the people who fell for his propaganda believed that Imām ʻAlī ﷺ and his companions did not even offer their prayers![9]

Therefore, if Imām Ḥasan ﷺ had attempted to oust him, it would have seemed like a political dispute for the caliphate, instead of removing a sinner from the position. He would have been imprisoned or killed, and the whole incident would have been painted as a political rebellion.

This teaches us to verify our information, and not always believe what we hear especially when it comes from a source that is not trustworthy. As mentioned previously, we cannot judge or trust information that we did not witness or investigate ourselves. People during the time of Imām Ḥasan ﷺ made the mistake of trusting Muʿāwiyah's propaganda without taking a deeper look into the reality of the political schemes of that time. This caused them to make a grievous error, and in the end go against the Imām ﷺ of their time.

Through the Peace Treaty, Imām Ḥasan ﷺ managed to expose Muʿāwiyah's true nature. During this time, the seeds of awareness against the crimes of the Banī Umayyah were planted, and during the time of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, these seeds then bloomed.

STOP AND REFLECT: Verifying sources is something that is emphasized in all areas of study. What other place can you think of that this is required? Why do you think that is?

9 Al-Manqarī, *Waqʾah aṣ-Ṣiffīn*, P. 354.

Activity 2.3a: Venn Diagram

Create a Venn Diagram comparing the actions of Muʿāwiyah to leaders of modern time. Pick one Prime Minister of a country, and research about their involvement in their communities, and how they have oppressed or helped their people. Has anything changed over time, or are most leaders still unjust? Does the Prime Minister of the country you chose lead with good character and morals? Defend your answer.

Activity 2.3b: Create a Campaign

This lesson goes over many ways in which Muʿāwiyah won over the majority of the Muslims during that time through tactfulness and lies. Imagine you were rallying to gain support for Imām Ḥasan ﷺ during that time. What might that campaign have looked like? Create a draft of the campaign using the worksheet below.

CAMPAIGN DRAFT WORKSHEET

1. Come up with a catchy slogan for your campaign that captures the essence of what you stand for:

2. What is your platform? What are some of your reasons for supporting the Imām ﷺ? (Remember, a campaign backed with truth and valid sources is stronger than one based on lies and exaggerations.)

Activity 2.3b: Create a Campaign (continued)

3. Imagine you are going door to door to propagate your campaign for the Imām ﷺ. What narration would you share to emphasize the character of our beloved Imām ﷺ? How does this narration prove that he is a fit leader? It does not need to be one mentioned in this lesson.

4. Design a logo for your campaign, and write a 3-5 word sentence explaining what it represents.

Activity 2.3c: Review Questions

1. Why did Muʿāwiyah become nervous when Imām Ḥasan ﷺ rose to speak? What does this tell us about Muʿāwiyah's character?

2. Why did Imām Ḥasan ﷺ move back to Medina? What did he do in Medina?

3. What does Islam say about hearing information from other people? What should we do in such circumstances?

4. In your own words, explain the narration mentioned about Imām Ḥasan's encounter with a Syrian man. What is your biggest takeaway from this narration?

5. Explain the political stance of leadership that Muʿāwiyah took compared to Imām Ḥasan ﷺ.

2.4 Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ: from Medina to Karbalāʾ

OBJECTIVES

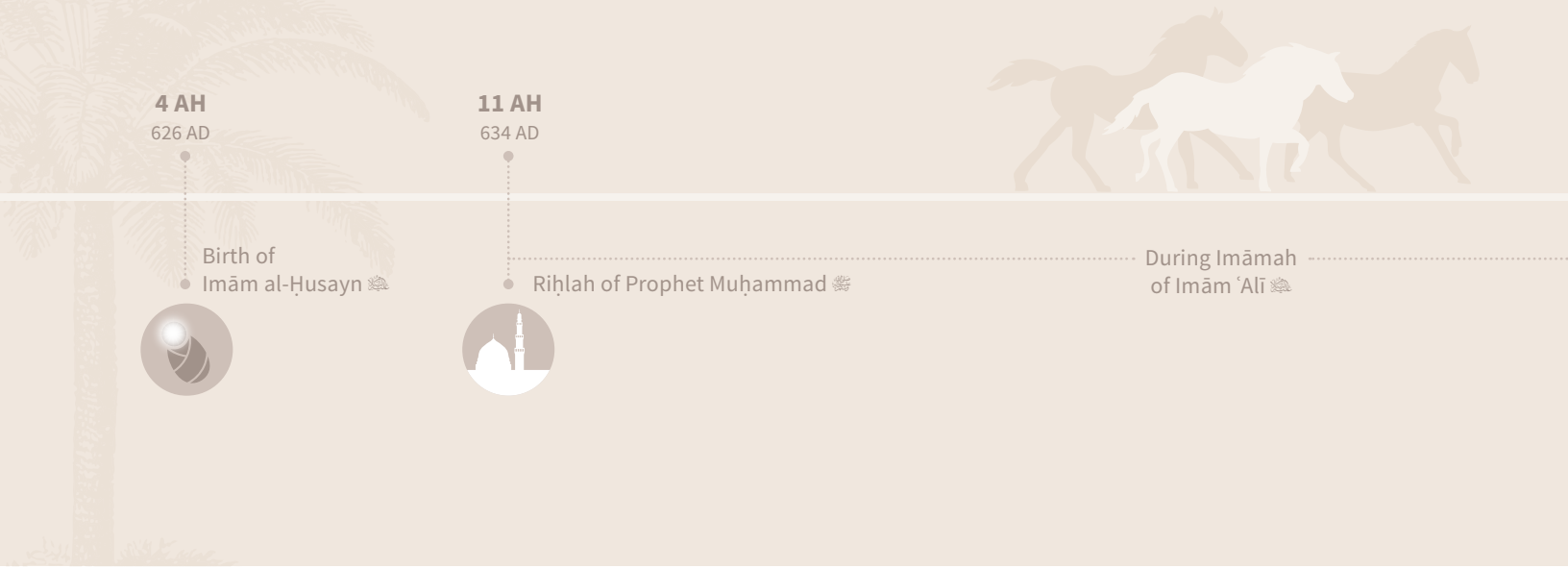
WE WILL:

- Learn from the events of Karbalāʾ how to be submissive to Allah ﷻ.
- Understand the mission and principles that Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ stood for in Karbalāʾ
- Explore major incidents that occurred before the 3rd Imām ﷺ left for his mission, and the significant role of Muslim ibn ʿAqīl
- Demonstrate and describe the concept of complete submission to Allah ﷻ

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ḤUSAYN ﷺ

Name	Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ
Kunyah	Abū ʿAbdillāh
Title	Sayyid ash-Shuhadāʾ
Parents	Imām ʿAlī ﷺ and Sayyidah Fāṭimah ﷺ
Date of Birth	3rd Shaʿbān 4 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imāmah	10 years
Date of Martyrdom	10th Muḥarram 61 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Karbalāʾ, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Beheaded on the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ
Lifespan	57 years
Location of Shrine	Karbalāʾ, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-ḤUSAYN ﷺ



It was the 28th night of Rajab. Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, along with his family and companions, had left the city of Medina at night, and were headed toward Mecca. During his journey, he was constantly reciting this particular verse of the Qurʾān that describes Prophet Mūsā's forced departure from his hometown:[1]

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

So he left it (the city), fearful and vigilant. He said: 'O my Lord, save me from the oppressive people.'[2]

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ took the main road to Mecca. Some tried to convince him to take a less-traveled route, so it would not be so easy for the governor to find him. However, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ refused.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ refused to take the less-traveled route? What was the wisdom behind this?

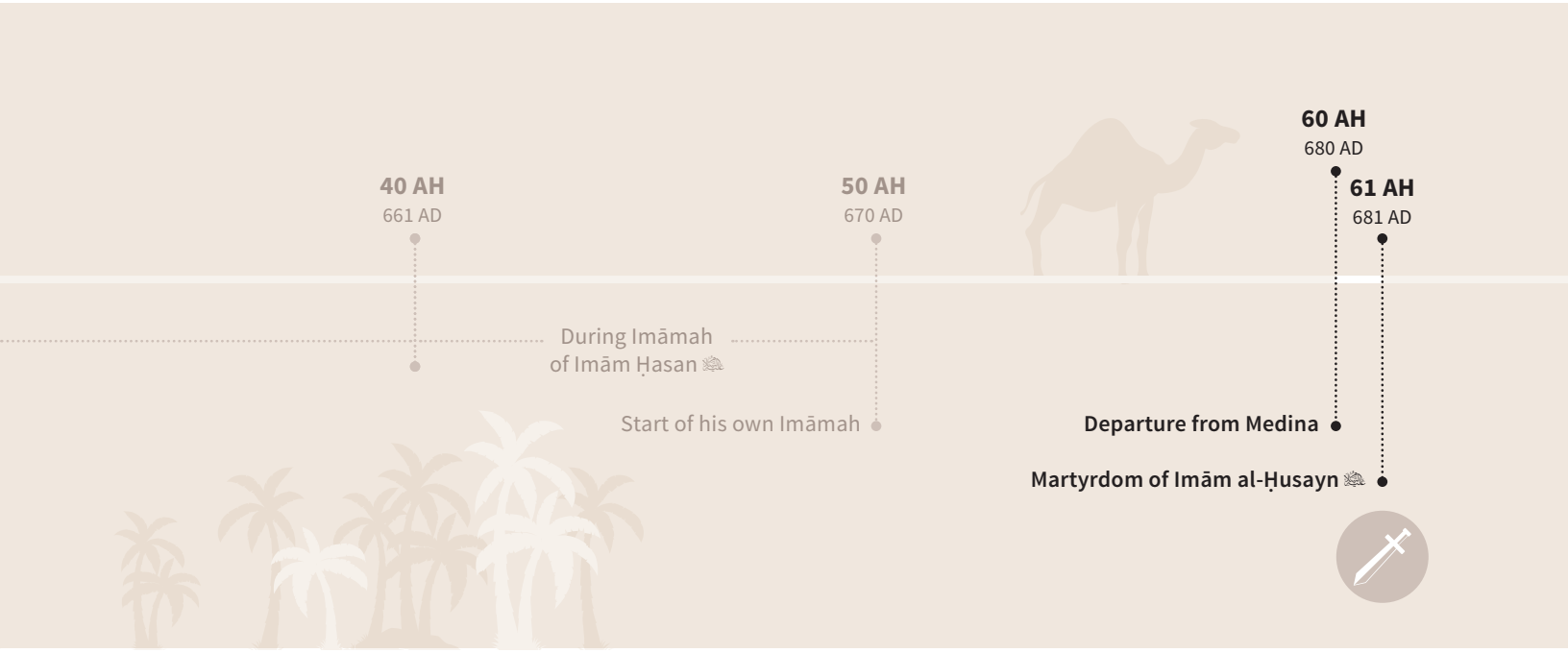
One reason Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ did this was because he wanted people to be aware of his actions. If he remained in Medina, he would likely have been killed. The news of his resistance would remain local and quickly be forgotten. In addition, it would have been easy for Yazīd to paint it as a rebellion against the government. In all of the actions that an Imām ﷺ takes, there is Divinely inspired wisdom and deliberation, as he aims to teach the people through his actions and words.

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ stated that he was against Yazīd because he was corrupt and an open sinner. This shows that his mission was based on principles, not individuals. He made it clear to everyone why he was taking a stance, and there could be no doubt what the objectives of his mission were. This would also expose Yazīd's evilness and awaken the people who were so easily manipulated.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it necessary to discover Imām Ḥusayn's objective through his own words?

The caravan finally entered Mecca on the eve of the 3rd of Shaʿbān. While in Mecca, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ received thousands of letters from the people of Kūfah. They were unhappy with Yazīd and had heard how Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ rejected him as the caliph. They wanted the Imām ﷺ to lead them in a rebellion to overthrow Yazīd. According to some narrations, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ received more than 12,000 letters from the people of Kūfah[3] (with many of the letters signed by multiple people).

1 Shaykh Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, Vol. 2, P. 35.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28), Verse 21.
3 Shaykh ʿAbbās Qummī, *Muntahā al-Āmāl,* Vol. 1, P. 566.



Masjid al-Kūfah

However, he knew how the Kūfan people had betrayed his brother, so he wanted to see if they were true to their word or not. He sent his trustworthy cousin, Muslim ibn ʿAqīl, to Kūfah to gauge their loyalty. He sent a letter with Muslim telling the people that Muslim ibn ʿAqīl was his messenger. In order to establish the authority of Muslim amongst the Kūfans, the Imām ﷺ described Muslim as follows:

> I have sent you my brother and cousin and the trusted one of my Ahlul Bayt…[4]

If the people were sincere, Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ promised he would come to Kūfah and help them rise up against Yazīd.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, discuss how the people of Kūfah had written 12,000 letters to the Imām ﷺ, yet in the end were not loyal to him. What does this say about what could have been in their hearts? Why do you think people know the truth, but still act on the opposite? Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

MUSLIM IBN ʿAQĪL IN KŪFAH

When Muslim entered Kūfah, he received a warm welcome from the Kūfans. He was pleased to see that the people were loyal to their word, so he wrote to Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ telling him that 18,000 people—almost a third of the 60,000 people including military personnel who lived there—had given him allegiance *(bayʿah)*, and encouraged the Imām ﷺ to come to Kūfah.[5]

When Ibn Ziyād, who Yazīd ordered to leave Baṣrah and go toward Kūfah to convince the Kūfans to abandon Muslim ibn ʿAqīl, approached the city of Kūfah, he knew the people would not allow him to enter as they had already paid allegiance to Muslim. So he only entered with a few men, wore a black turban, and covered his face. The people knew that Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was on his way to Kūfah, so they mistook Ibn Ziyād and his entourage for the Imām ﷺ. The people lined the streets, welcoming the man they thought was the 3rd Imām ﷺ. However, when he removed the covering from his face, the people were horrified to see that it was Ibn Ziyād instead. His reputation as a ruthless delegate of the Umayyads preceded his arrival into Kūfah.

Before long, Ibn Ziyād took command of the city and turned almost all of the people against Muslim ibn ʿAqīl. He threatened or bribed the Kūfans, and it did not take long for the people to turn their backs on Muslim. Muslim found shelter at a pious old lady's house, but her son reported Muslim's whereabouts to Ibn Ziyād who immediately apprehended Muslim. He ordered his men to take him to the roof, kill him, and throw his body off the building. In his last moments, Muslim continued to try and send a message to the Imām ﷺ about the betrayal of the Kūfans.[6]

STOP AND REFLECT: Compare Muslim's actions in Kūfah with Ibn Ziyād's.

Muslim's stance and willingness to fight for his Imām ﷺ, and remembering the Imām ﷺ even at the last moment of his life, provides a strong example for those striving to be true followers of the Imām ﷺ of their time. Muslim gave not only his own life, but at least some, if not all, of his sons also became martyrs along with Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ in Karbalāʾ on the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ; and according to some reports, two of his young sons escaped after being imprisoned by the enemy army and were later martyred after being caught.[7]

4 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī,* Vol 5, P. 353. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
5 *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī,* Vol 3, P. 395; Ibn Saʿd, *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā,* Vol. 1, P. 459. (Ahlus Sunnah Sources)
6 *Al-Irshād*, Pp. 53-63.
7 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amāli*, Pp. 83-88.

THINK ALOUD: A common misconception amongst other sects is that the killing of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was just some fighting amongst the Shīʿah's. From what you know about the events preceding the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, are the Shīʿahs responsible for the killing of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ?

This claim is self-contradictory. Shīʿah means a 'follower.' How can a person follow a leader, but then fight against him? A follower fights for his Imām ﷺ, not against him. A Shīʿah is one who believes in the immaculate nature *(ʿiṣmah)* of the 12 Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ as the only successors of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, takes his religion from them, and obeys them in all circumstances. He is at peace with those who are at peace with the Imāms ﷺ, and is at war against those who fight against them. He loves the Imāms ﷺ and repudiates their enemies.

A Shīʿah is at peace with those who are at peace with the Imāms ﷺ, and is at war against those who fight against them.

During the Battle of Karbalāʾ, the criterion for being a Shīʿah of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ was whether that they fought for or against Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ.[8] Those who fought against Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ in Karbalāʾ mainly came from Kūfah. However, it is not true that most Kūfans were Shīʿahs. There were six main groups of people in Kūfah:

1. **Sincere and true Shīʿah who believed in the inerrancy *(ʿiṣmah*) of the Imāms** ﷺ, such as Hānī ibn ʿUrwa, Mukhtār ath-Thaqafī, Ḥabīb ibn Maẓāhir, Muslim ibn ʿAwsaja, etc. These people were either killed prior to the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, imprisoned, or reached Karbalāʾ with great difficulty and supported Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ until their own martyrdom alongside the Imām ﷺ.
2. **Lovers of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ who did not believe in the inerrancy *(ʿiṣmah)* of the Imāms** ﷺ: people such as Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad, Musayyab ibn Najabah, and others. These people preferred the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ over the Umayyad Caliphs and hence wrote invitation letters to Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ. However, when Hānī ibn ʿUrwa and Muslim ibn ʿAqīl were brutally killed, they were intimidated and abandoned the Imām ﷺ, though they never fought against the Imām ﷺ either. Later on, they regretted their actions, and waged the Penitents Uprising *(Thawrah al-Tawwābīn).*
3. **Umawis:** The followers of the Umayyads, such as ʿAmr ibn Ḥajjāj, ʿAmr ibn Ḥurayth, ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, etc. They, along with their soldiers, were among the main perpetrators of Karbalāʾ. It is interesting to note that they too, in an act of hypocrisy, had signed invitation letters to Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ!
4. **Khawārij:** Those who rebelled or left, such as Shabath ibn Ribʿī, Ḥajjār ibn Abjar, etc. They too were among the perpetrators of the tragedy of Karbalāʾ.
5. **Laymen who jumped on the bandwagon.** They were worldly people whose main motivation was their own personal gains. They signed the invitation letters when things were promising for Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, but when faced with Ibn Ziyād's threats and bribery, they turned on their heels.
6. **A religious minority** of Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. There is little historical evidence of their involvement either way.

8 *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 5, P. 417. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

KILLERS OF IMĀM ḤUSAYN ﷺ

The most famous enemies of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ who killed many people on the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ included ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, Shimr ibn Dhil Jawshan, Shabath ibn Ribʿī, Ḥajjār ibn Abjar, ʿAmr ibn Ḥajjāj, and Ḥarmalā ibn Kāhil. These are among the people who, when Imām ʿAlī ﷺ declared that *Ṣalātul Tarāwīḥ* [9] should not be recited in congregation, opposed the Imām ﷺ and yelled out: "The tradition of ʿUmar (is being ignored), the tradition of ʿUmar (is being ignored)!" [10] How can you even call such people Shīʿah?!

ENEMIES of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ

ʿUmar ibn Saʿd

Shimr ibn Dhil Jawshan

Shabath ibn Ribʿī

Ḥajjār ibn Abjar

ʿAmr ibn Ḥajjāj

Ḥarmalā ibn Kāhil

Ubayd Allāh Ibn Ziyād

Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya

The murderers of Karbalāʾ also never introduced themselves as the lovers or followers of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ. Rather, they said: "Surely, we fight you for our hatred toward your father!" [11] They also called the Imām ﷺ a liar! According to a scholar from the Ahlus Sunnah, Muḥammad Ṭabarī, one of the soldiers of ʿUmar ibn Saʿd shouted at the Imām ﷺ: "O Ḥusayn, O liar, son of a liar!" [12]

Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ never referred to the criminals of Karbalāʾ as his followers or ex-followers. Rather, he called them the shīʿahs (followers) of the children of Abū Sufyan. On the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, when the Imām ﷺ saw that they were intending to raid his tents, he shouted at them: "Woe to you, O shīʿahs (followers) of the children of Abū Sufyan! If you do not adhere to any religion, nor fear the Day of Judgment, then (at least) act like men in your worldly affairs." [13]

Almost all historians have reported that when Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ left Mecca for Kūfah, Yazīd wrote a letter to the governor of Kūfah, Ibn Ziyād, ordering him to "either behead Ḥusayn, or take him as a slave." Thus, when Ibn Ziyād had the Imām ﷺ killed, he sent his head to Yazīd.[14] Therefore, Yazīd was the main perpetrator of the killing of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ, while the others also played a part in the tragedy of Karbalāʾ.

We must strive to sincerely love the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and become their true followers.

9 These are optional prayers that are performed in congregation in the month of Ramaḍān by the Ahlus Sunnah, however in the Shīʿah sect we do not have any traditions which indicate that the Prophet ﷺ or Imāms ﷺ recited it as such.
10 Ibn Abil-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 12, P. 283.
11 al-Ḥanafī, Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm, *Yanābīʿ al-Mawaddah,* Vol. 3, Pp. 79-80. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
12 *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 5, P. 434. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
13 Khwārizmī, al-Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn.* Vol. 2, P. 38.
14 Dhahabī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Tārīkh al-Islām,* Vol. 3, P. 305. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)

Activity 2.4a: Review Questions

1. Why did Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ set to travel to Kūfah despite knowing from Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ what his destiny would be?

2. Why did Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ send Muslim ibn ʿAqīl to Kūfah? What happened to him?

3. Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ used the quality of "the trusted one" to introduce Muslim to the Kūfans. How can someone become trustworthy in the eyes of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ?

2.5 Imām ar-Riḍā's Legacy and Contributions

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the historical and political environment of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ.
- Discuss the knowledge and debates of the 8th Imām ﷺ.
- Learn the titles of Imām ar-Riḍā's books, and what sources of knowledge they contain.
- Understand the perspective of Islam on free will versus compulsion.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM ʿALĪ IBN MŪSĀ AR-RIḌĀ' ﷺ

Name	ʿAlī ibn Mūsā
Kunyah	Abul Ḥasan
Title	ar-Riḍā
Parents	Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ and Lady Ummul Banīn Najmah
Date of Birth	11th Dhul Qaʿdah 148 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Number of Children	6 (some say he had only one son, the 9th Imam ﷺ, while others say he had five sons and one daughter)
Duration of Imāmah	20 Years
Date of Martyrdom	Last day of Ṣafar, 203 AH
Cause of Martyrdom	Poisoned by the ʿAbbāsid Caliph, Maʾmūn
Lifespan	55 Years
Location of Shrine	Mashhad, Iran

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AR-RIḌĀ ﷺ

148 AH
765 AD

Birth of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ

Imām ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ﷺ is the 8th Divinely-appointed successor of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His most famous title is *ar-Riḍā*, which means 'one who is pleasing to Allah and to those around them'—as even his enemies were pleased with him!

THE LIFE OF IMĀM ʿALĪ AR-RIḌĀ ﷺ

After his father, Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ, was poisoned in prison in 183 AH, Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ was given the great responsibility of *Imāmah* at the age of 35 by Allah ﷻ. He carried out his duties in Medina and played a vital role in spreading the correct teachings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the proper interpretation of the Qurʿān.

Hārūn ar-Rashīd, an ʿAbbāsid caliph, had made life very difficult for the followers of the Imāms ﷺ. He died in 193 AH, leaving behind two sons: Amīn and Maʾmūn. The two sons fought a bitter civil war, while the ʿAlawī revolts in Iraq, Ḥijāz, and Yemen also posed a major threat to ʿAbbāsid power. Maʾmūn, after having his brother killed, gained the position of the caliphate. He initially made it appear as if he was a fan of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, but gradually began to show his true colors after summoning Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ to Iran. He continued to oppress the 8th Imām ﷺ and the Shīʿahs, but knew that he needed to act strategically so that they would not revolt against him.

KNOWLEDGE AND PIETY OF IMĀM AR-RIḌĀ ﷺ

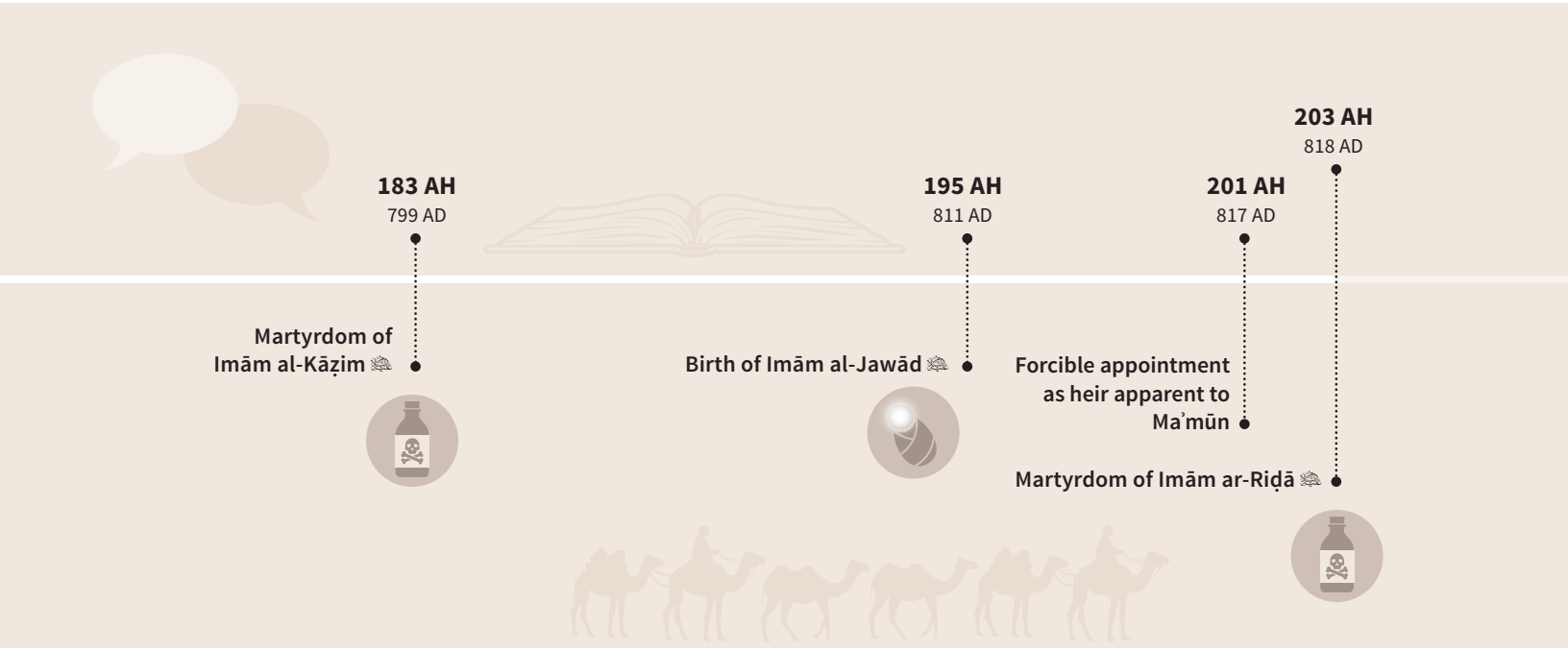
Imām ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā's knowledge, generosity, humility, worship, and pleasant disposition were widely known. Everyone from jurists to Ṣūfi mystics held him in high regard, and his merits have been recorded by both his followers and enemies.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why were even the enemies of our Imāms ﷺ not able to find any faults with them? How does this testify to the Imams' immaculateness *(ʿiṣmah)* and very lofty status?

Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ would often stay up the entire night in worship, and would finish reciting the whole Qurʾān in three days. He would worship for hours on end, and pray 1,000 *rakʿah* a day—like the other Imāms ﷺ from his ancestors. He was often seen prostrating himself before Allah ﷻ for long periods of time.

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ demonstrated care toward others and acted respectfully toward everyone. Whenever he was around people, he would always sit upright and never reclined his back on anything. He never laughed loudly, but would smile instead. When it was time to have a meal, he would sit with his entire family—including the servants and maids, and they would all share their food together.[1]

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, Vol. 2, P. 170.



Risālah al-Dhahabiyyah fi aṭ-Ṭib

FAMOUS WORKS OF THE IMĀM ﷺ

A number of books and writings have been attributed to Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ. A famous book which contains his narrations is called *ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*. It was compiled in the 10th Century by one of the greatest Shīʿah scholars, Shaykh Ṣadūq. The book also contains the full transcripts of the famous debates which Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ had in which he defeated the leaders of various beliefs.

Another famous work of the 8th Imām ﷺ is *Risālah al-Dhahabiyyah fi aṭ-Ṭibb* (The Golden Medical Dissertation). This dissertation is one of the most precious pieces of Islamic legacy dealing with the Science of Medicine, involving unprecedented details in anatomy, biology, physiology, pathology, and the science of health care.

Maʾmūn had a discussion about various sciences with the top scholars of his time. When the discussion moved on to medicine, he asked Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ to share what he knew. The Imām ﷺ replied that he would make a compilation of his knowledge on this subject, and later sent it to Maʾmūn in the form of a letter. Maʾmūn was so impressed by the exact medical details in the letter that he ordered for it to be written in gold. However, although it is narrated that the Imām ﷺ composed such a treatise, expert scholars have expressed doubts whether the treatise that is currently available is the same treatise that the Imām ﷺ had written or not.[2]

DEBATES AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE[3]

During the time that Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ was in Khurāsān, Maʾmūn arranged for various debates between the Imām ﷺ and various scholars of different religions. Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ defeated everyone who debated him, quoting each individual's own religious Scriptures as proof for his claims. No one was able to match his knowledge regardless of the subject. Every traveler who came to the capital city would go back to their town and talk about the knowledge of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ; this is why he was also called the Knowledgeable One *(ʿĀlim)* of the family of Muḥammad ﷺ.

DEBATE WITH A CHRISTIAN

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ debated many people during his time. Many of these debates were set up by Maʾmūn in an attempt to ruin the Imām's reputation and respect. However, these sessions always ended with everyone being impressed by the Imām's knowledge. During one debate with a Christian leader named Jāthalīq, Jāthalīq told Maʾmun that since he does not believe in Islam or the Prophet ﷺ of Islam, he cannot be debated using the Noble Qurʾān.

2 https://fa.wikifeqh.ir/رساله_ذهبيه_امام_رضا
3 Ṭabarsī, Abū Manṣūr, *Iḥtijāj Ṭabarsī*, Vol. 2, Pp. 415-425.

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ, upon hearing this, told him that they could debate and only use the Bible as a reference. During this debate, there were two main issues of contention. The first was the Prophethood of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and the second was regarding the deification of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ.

Upon proving that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ was a man, not God, Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said: "By Allah, we believe in Prophet ʿĪsā who believed in Prophet Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and his family. We have nothing against Prophet ʿĪsā except his weakness, and the shortage of his fasting and prayer." [4]

When the Christian leader heard the last words of the Imām's statement, he shouted: "By God, you have corrupted your knowledge! Your affair has become weak! I thought you were the most learned of the Muslims?!"

The Imām ﷺ faced him calmly, and asked: "Why do you say this?"

Jāthalīq answered: "Due to your statement that ʿĪsā was weak in fasting and praying. He always fasted during the day, and prayed at night."

He asked Jāthalīq: "To whom then did ʿĪsā fast and pray?"

Jāthalīq did not answer, not knowing what to say.[5] The Imām ﷺ thus disproved the Christian belief that Jesus is God, since Prophet ʿĪsā's prayers and fasting indicated that he was praying to a higher Being, i.e., the One True God.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner discuss what occurred in the debate between Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ and Jāthalīq. Create a list of elements that you think would help if someone had to debate people of other religions kindly. Be prepared to share your list and reasonings with the class.

4 It is likely that Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ was indicating that Prophet ʿĪsā, despite the great amount of his fasting and prayers, was still a human being, thus was subject to the limitations of a creation of the Almighty One, as opposed to the Creator Himself who has no limitations whatsoever.

5 Sharif al-Qarashī, Bāqir, *The life of Imām ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ar-Ridā*.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S WILL AND PEOPLE'S WILL[6]

In one debate, Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ explained the difference between the Will of Allah ﷻ and the will of human beings.

Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā said: "I asked Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā: 'Tell me about the Will of Allah and the will of His creations.'"

The Imām ﷺ replied:

> *"The will of a person is something from within that they feel, then it occurs to them that they should act upon that. However, regarding Allah, His Will is His Action, nothing other than that, because He does not contemplate upon doing something, nor does He decide to do something, nor does He set His mind to do something—as all these actualities have nothing to do with His Essence; they are among the faculties of human beings, and they are among the characteristics of His creations. Thus, Allah's Will is His Action, nothing other than that. He says 'Be!' and it is without articulating anything, or using a tongue, or setting His mind upon something, or contemplating something, nor does He think about the means to do so, nor does He think about how."*

Allah's Will is His Action

He says 'Be!' and it is

STOP AND REFLECT: How are Allah's Actions and His Will the same? Can you show that this is different from a human being's will?

COMPULSION AND EMPOWERMENT

The debate about how much free will we have as human beings has been popular among Muslims for a very long time. Some Muslims claim that we do not have any real choice in our actions, and that we are forced to perform the actions we think we are 'choosing.' Other Muslims believe that we have absolute free will and we always choose what we want to do with no interference from anyone.

A man visited Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ and asked him: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! It has been reported to us that the truthful, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, said: 'There is neither compulsion, nor empowerment, but a path in between the two.' What exactly did he mean by this?"

The Imām ﷺ replied: "Whoever claims that Allah makes us perform our deeds, then punishes us for doing them has in fact accepted the concept of compulsion; and whoever claims that Almighty Allah empowers His Proofs to (independently) distribute His sustenance has in fact adopted the belief of empowerment. One who believes in compulsion is a disbeliever *(kāfir)*, and one who believes in empowerment is a polytheist *(mushrik)*."

6 Imām ar-Riḍā: Historical and Biographical Research, www.al-islam.org.

So the man asked him: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! Then what is the path between the two?"

The Imām ﷺ answered: "It is finding a way to do what one is enjoined to do, and forsake what one is enjoined to forsake."

I asked him: "Does Almighty Allah have a way and a Will in this regard?"

He ﷺ replied: "In regards to deeds done in obedience to His commandments, His Will in their regard is His approval of and assistance in their performance. With regards to His Will about sins, it is His order that they should be shunned, that He condemns them, and that He forsakes those who commit them."[7]

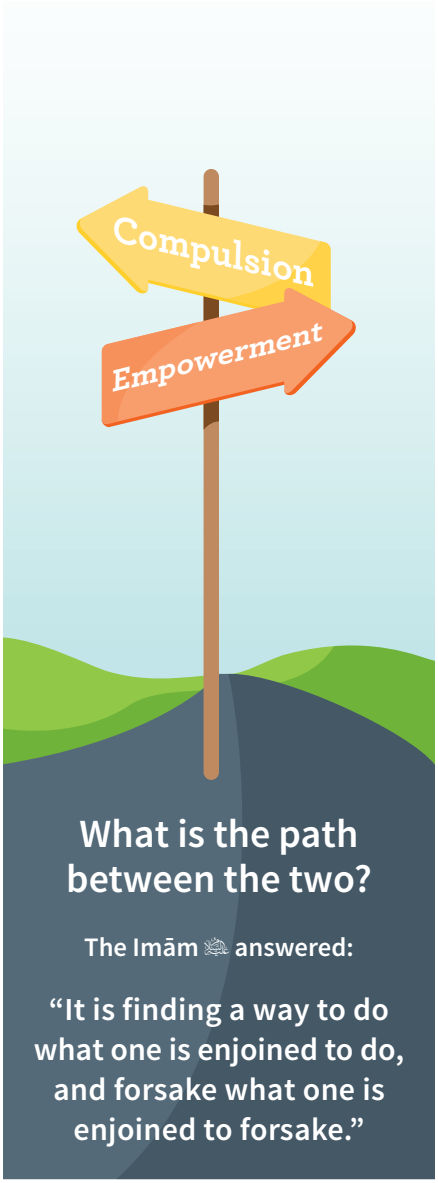
STOP AND REFLECT: How do you understand the above words of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ when he answered the question about free will, compulsion, and the path in between these two?

The above *ḥadīth* from Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ shows that Islam is **not** a religion of extremes, but of moderation.

Even in regards to free will, as Muslims we need to find the middle path. We cannot do anything we desire and say that this is the Will of Allah ﷻ and we have no other choice, as we do have a choice in our actions.

Nor can we go to the other extreme and say that Allah ﷻ has no destiny or empowerment for us. Allah ﷻ has given us the tools we need to be able to walk this middle path, such as *duʿās,* prayers, the nights of Qadr, etc., to be able to change what is written for us, as well as seeking forgiveness through His Mercy when we make mistakes or commit a sin.

As the 8th Imām ﷺ stated, sins should be shunned, as Allah ﷻ condemns them. However, He also forgives us when we sincerely seek forgiveness after committing them. Allah's Will and a human being's will are involved in our voluntary actions—these two wills are in line with one another. It is a testament to Imām ar-Riḍā's station and eloquence that he vocalized the meaning of free will in Islam so beautifully. However, without truly understanding Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)* and the Power of Allah ﷻ, we cannot develop a deep understanding of the Islamic perspective on free will and compulsion.


Compulsion
Empowerment
What is the path between the two?
The Imām ﷺ answered:
"It is finding a way to do what one is enjoined to do, and forsake what one is enjoined to forsake."

7 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 28, P. 340.

Activity 2.5a: Research

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ was known for his debates with other scholars of different religions. Do research on one of these debates, and write a one page summary which includes how this debate proves either the authenticity of Islam, Prophethood, or Imamate.

Activity 2.5b: Review Questions

1. State in your own words what *"ar-Riḍā"* means. What can we learn from this title of the Imām ؑ?

2. Most of the debates and narrations we have from the 8th Imām ؑ are from the three years after Maʾmūn forcibly made him migrate to the capital city or Iran, Marv. How do you think that the Imām's public demonstration of his mastery over the various religions was beneficial to calling people to Islam?

3. In your own words, summarize one *ḥadīth* from Imām ar-Riḍā ؑ on free will and compulsion.

2.6 Imām ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Discuss the major events that occurred during and after Imām ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā ﷺ migrated to Marv.
- Look at Imām's political and intellectual activities during this period.
- Explore how Imām's conduct influenced others.
- Discover lessons to be learned from the life and teachings of the 8th Imām ﷺ.

THINK ALOUD: Recall the life story and struggles of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ. How was the political climate hostile during the time of our 8th Imām ﷺ?

APPOINTMENT OF IMĀM AR-RIḌĀ ﷺ AS CROWN PRINCE

Maʾmūn saw that the Shīʿahs were increasing in number despite torture and oppression. He decided to change his approach and take advantage of the status that Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ had in order to strengthen his own position and power. He called himself a fan of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, and ordered that the descendants of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ should not be harmed [even though most of the *Sādāt* who migrated after the Imām ﷺ were still assassinated]. He then offered Imam ar-Riḍā ﷺ the position of being the Crown Prince.

Having experienced the ʿAbbāsid's oppression against the Banī Hāshim in general, and his father, Imām aI-Kāẓim ﷺ, in particular, and being fully aware of the political situation of that time, Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ knew what Maʾmūn's true intentions were. For this reason, Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ initially refused the appointment. He only reluctantly agreed when it became clear that he was being forced into having to accept it. However, he stated that he would have no involvement in the government affairs. Despite the difficult circumstances, the Imām ﷺ, as we will see, used this opportunity to educate the people and spread the message of his noble forefathers ﷺ.

THINK ALOUD: Why did the Imām ﷺ refuse to participate in the government affairs after being forced to accept the position of Crown Prince?

While traveling to and residing in Marv,[1] the popularity and esteem of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ rose steadily day by day. Maʾmūn soon felt threatened by the towering personality and influence of the Imām ﷺ. The trip took much longer than anticipated. The two month journey took almost six months to complete.[2]

When Maʾmūn forced Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ to migrate from Medina to Marv, he asked his men to escort the Imām ﷺ through cities where there were no Shīʿahs so that the popularity of the Imām ﷺ would not grow. Maʾmūn's agents took the Imām ﷺ to many places that were against the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. They had secretly plotted for Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ to be killed along the way to the capital.

However, many people came to listen to the sermons of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ. As people found out that the grandson of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was passing through their town or village, they came out in large numbers to greet him.

1 During that time, the capital of the Khurāsān province was Marv; but in modern day, Khurāsān is in Iran, and the ancient city of Marv is now in modern day Turkmenistan. https://fa.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%88_(%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C)#:~:text=%D9%85%D9%8E%D8%B1%D9%88.

2 https://www.edub.ir/education/view/20395

ḤADĪTH OF THE GOLDEN CHAIN

When Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ stopped at a place called Nīshāpūr, which was one of the four major cities in the Khurāsān region at that time, around 20,000 to 24,000 scribes came to visit him, and asked him to narrate a *ḥadīth* to them before departing. The Imām ﷺ was already on his horse, about to leave Nīshāpūr, so he turned to them and said:

> I heard my father, Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar say, that he heard his father, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad say, that he heard his father, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī say, that he heard his father, ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn say, that he heard his father, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib say, that he heard his father, Amīrul Muʾminīn ʿAli ibn Abī Ṭālib say, that he heard the Messenger of Allah say, that he heard Jibrāʾīl say, that he heard Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, say:
>
> 'The testimony there is no god except Allah *(Lā ilāha illallāh)* is My fortress. So whoever enters My fortress will be safe from My wrath.'[3]

Then as the horse of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ was about to move, the Imām ﷺ turned again to the scribes and added:

> But with certain conditions!
> And I am one of those conditions.[4]

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think this *ḥadīth* means? How would Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ be a condition to be safeguarded from the wrath of Allah ﷻ?

The Imāms ﷺ are our connections and doors of getting closer to Allah ﷻ. When the Imām ﷺ refers to himself as being a condition for entering Allah's fortress and being safe from His punishment, he is referring to the concept of *Imāmah*.

The Imām ﷺ was telling the people that true Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)* is not simply to surrender to Allah ﷻ in matters of worship, but to surrender to Allah ﷻ in complete obedience. Allah ﷻ commanded all of the believers to obey those whom He has given authority to. Indeed, Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān: "O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority among you..."[5]

Allah ﷻ also says: "The one who obeys the Messenger certainly obeys Allah..."[6]

So whoever obeys the Imāms ﷺ has obeyed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and whoever obeys Messenger of Allah ﷺ has obeyed Allah ﷻ and their claim of *Lā ilāha illallāh* is true. Similarly, whoever disobeys the rightful Imāms ﷺ has disobeyed Allah ﷻ, and will therefore be removed from the fortress of *Tawḥīd*.

This beautiful *ḥadīth* is known as the *Ḥadīth* of the Golden Chain—*Ḥadīth Silsilat adh-Dhahab*, because everyone in the chain of narrators, from Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ all the way to Jibrāʾīl is immaculate and pure.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What aspects of this *ḥadīth* make it valuable? Look at the chain of narrators, as well as the content of the *ḥadīth*. With a partner, discuss your observations. Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

3 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, P. 25.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 3, P. 7.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 59.
6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 80.

Shrine of Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūma in Qum, Iran

THE SISTER OF IMĀM AR-RIḌĀ ﷺ: LADY FĀṬIMAH MAʿṢŪMAH

After a difficult year of separation from her beloved brother, Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūmah decided to go visit him. She began this journey from Medina to Marv, in the year 201 AH, accompanied by a caravan made up of some members of her household and friends of the Imām ﷺ. When Lady Maʿṣūmah became ill at Sāweh, she enquired from her companions how far the city of Qum was. She was told that it was about 10 *farsakh* (approx 37 miles) away. She asked to be taken to Qum, which at that time was a center for the Shīʿah.

It is believed that Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūmah died on the 10th or the 12th of Rabīʿal-Ākhir. She spent the last 16 or 17 days of her life in Qum.

In an tradition from Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ, he says:

> "Whoever visits Maʿṣūmah in Qum is like the one who has visited me."[7]

This tradition implies that the rewards and benefits awarded to one who visits Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūmah or Imam ar-Riḍā ﷺ are the same. Also, from this tradition, we get the title of *Maʿṣūmah* (immaculate) that was given to this noble lady by the 8th Imām ﷺ himself.

EID PRAYERS

As discussed previously, when Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ accepted Maʾmūn's appointment as his successor, he did so with the condition that he would not be involved in any government affairs. However, when the first Eid came, Maʾmūn decided that Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ should lead the Eid prayers, which is considered a government appointment.

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ reminded Maʾmūn about their agreement, yet Maʾmūn insisted, and when there was no way out of it, Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ finally sent him a message saying: "If you would have excused me, it would have been better. But since you have not, I will go out the way my father and grandfather used to go out for the Eid prayers."

"Go as you wish" replied Maʾmūn. He then ordered all of the military commanders and officials in his court to go to the door of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ the next morning, and escort him to the place of the Eid prayers.

7 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 102, P. 265.

When people came to know that the grandson of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was going to go out and lead the Eid prayers escorted by the caliph's men, they sat on their rooftops and by the side of the roads waiting for him to come out so that they could see him. Even the women and children lined up, waiting eagerly to see the Imām ﷺ.

When the sun rose, the military leaders and soldiers, dressed with their usual pomp, arrived at the door of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ. The Imām ﷺ performed the major ablution *(ghusl)* and put on his Eid clothes. He wore a white outfit and put on a cotton turban. He applied perfume, took his staff in his right hand, and said to his servants: "Do as I do."

Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ then came out barefoot, as is recommended *(mustaḥab)* to do this for Eid *ṣalāh*, and began walking toward the designated place for Eid *ṣalāh*. He would walk a little bit, then raise his head toward the heavens and say: *"Allāhu Akbar!"* and all the servants and people with him echoed *"Allāhu Akbar!"* When the military commanders and soldiers saw him doing this, they all dismounted from their horses and did the same.

The books of history report that as Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ would call out *"Allāhu Akbar!"* and everyone would repeat this, it felt as if the sky and the walls of all the buildings were calling out with him. The city shook with weeping and clamour when the people heard Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ glorifying Allah ﷻ in this manner.

When Maʾmūn was informed about the situation, he was warned: "If ar-Riḍā reaches the place of Eid ṣalāh in this way, the people will all overthrow you."

Subsequently, Maʾmūn sent a message to Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ saying: "We have put excessive burden on you and caused you hardship. We request that you go back and let someone else lead the Eid prayers in the usual manner." Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ then called for his shoes, put them on, mounted a horse, and went back home.[8]

Clearly, this incident shows the power that an Imām ﷺ can have over the hearts of people, and how everything around him responds to him by the Will of Allah ﷻ!

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why would Maʾmūn send a message to Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ to go back home before even beginning the *ṣalāh*? Think of the political circumstance at that time, and the games that Maʾmūn played which we learned in previous lessons. Discuss with a partner and share your answers with the class.

8 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, Vol. 2, P. 150.

Shrine of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ in Mashhad, Iran

MARTYRDOM OF IMĀMʿALĪ AR-RIḌĀ ﷺ

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said:

> "Faith is based on four pillars: reliance on Allah, being pleased with Allah's decree, submission to the command of Allah, and entrusting Allah with one's affairs."[9]

In our lives, we face a mixture of calamities and good fortunes. Allah ﷻ Wills for us our fair share of trials, testifying that we are never given any burden which we cannot cope with. A major challenge for us all is to remain pleased and satisfied with whatever Allah ﷻ decrees for us no matter what happens.

In times of good fortunes, being pleased with Allah ﷻ and thanking Him for all of our blessings causes Him to increase those blessings. In times of trials and hardships, the benefit of remaining pleased with what Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon us, is knowing that everything that is happening to us is due to the Will of Allah ﷻ, meaning that there is great wisdom behind it, and that He knows what is best for us. It will therefore prevent us from becoming disheartened, and help us get through the different afflictions that we will face in our lives.

Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ displayed this quality throughout his entire lifetime, especially toward the end of his life. When Maʾmūn was trying to assassinate Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ, the Imām ﷺ responded with the utmost calm composure, giving himself up to the Will of Allah ﷻ, knowing there was no escape from this inevitable fate.

THINK ALOUD: Does being pleased with Allah ﷻ become harder in times of trials and tribulations? Brainstorm techniques that can help you remain pleased with the Will of Allah ﷻ during various difficulties in life.

The appointment of the Imām ﷺ created anger and resentment among certain groups who were against the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, which meant that Maʾmūn's political goals could not be fulfilled with the presence of the Imām ﷺ.

Maʾmūn felt more and more threatened by the presence, growing influence, and popularity of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ, so he decided to assassinate the Imām ﷺ. Abūl Ṣalt al-Hirawī, a close companion of the 8th Imām ﷺ narrates: "I entered the house of ar-Riḍā after he left the tent of Maʾmūn, and he said to me: 'O Abā Ṣalt! They have done it...!' and he kept unifying and praising Allah." The Imām ﷺ had been given grapes by Maʾmūn which had been poisoned. This poisoning led to his death within a few hours.[10]

9 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, Vol. 1, P. 445
10 *ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, Vol. 2, P. 242.

Activity 2.6a: Review Questions

1. Summarize the importance of the *Ḥadīth* of the Golden Chain. Why is this such an important *Ḥadīth*?

2. What was the political game of Maʾmūn, and why did he appoint Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ as his Crown Prince?

3. Summarize what happened before the Eid prayers? Why did the Imām ﷺ accept, but go back before even leading the prayers?

4. Why did Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ accept to be Crown Prince? What was his condition?

5. Write the *ḥadīth* from Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ that speaks about the merit of his sister. What benefits does a person receive who goes to her *ziyārah*?

2.7 Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād's Short Life

OBJECTIVES

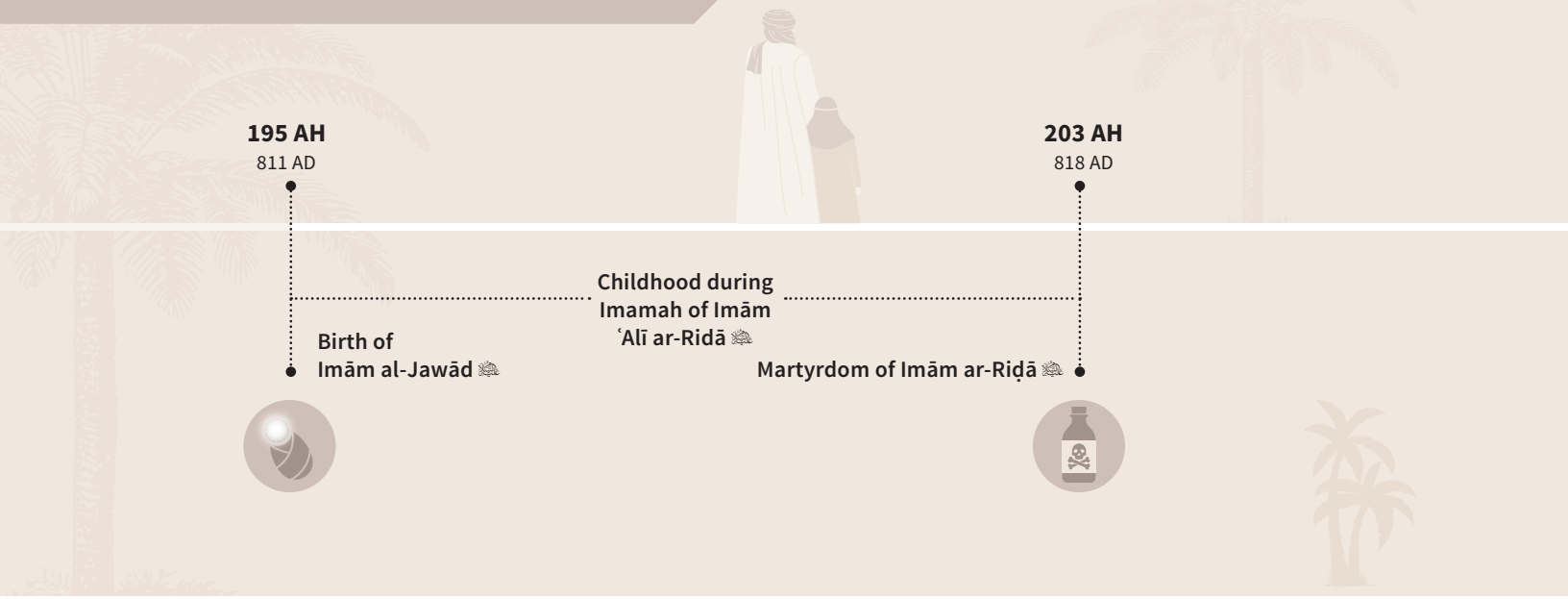
WE WILL:

- Learn about the short life of the 9th successor, Imām al-Jawād ﷺ.
- Implement generosity into our lives as taught by Imām al-Jawād ﷺ.
- Understand the various forms of generosity, and what it means to be generous.

AN OVERVIEW OF IMĀM MUḤAMMAD AL-JAWĀD ﷺ

Name	Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī
Kunyah	Abū Jaʿfar
Title	at-Taqī, al-Jawād
Parents	Imām ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā ﷺ and Lady Khayzurān
Date of Birth	10th Rajab 195 AH
Birthplace	Medina, Arabia
Duration of Imāmah	17 years
Date of Martyrdom	29th Dhul Qaʿdah 220 AH
Place of Martyrdom	Baghdād, Iraq
Cause of Martyrdom	Poisoned by al-Muʿtaṣim
Lifespan	25 years
Location of Grave	Kāẓimayn, Iraq

TIMELINE OF IMĀM AL-JAWĀD ﷺ



Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ﷺ, the 9th Imām, sometimes called Abū Jaʿfar, was known as *al-Jawād*—the Generous One, and *at-Taqī*—the Pious One.

Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād ﷺ was only about 8 years old when his father was martyred, and he became the Imām of the time. Despite his young age, he was the most learned individual of his time.

AL-JAWĀD:
the Generous One

AT-TAQĪ:
the Pious One

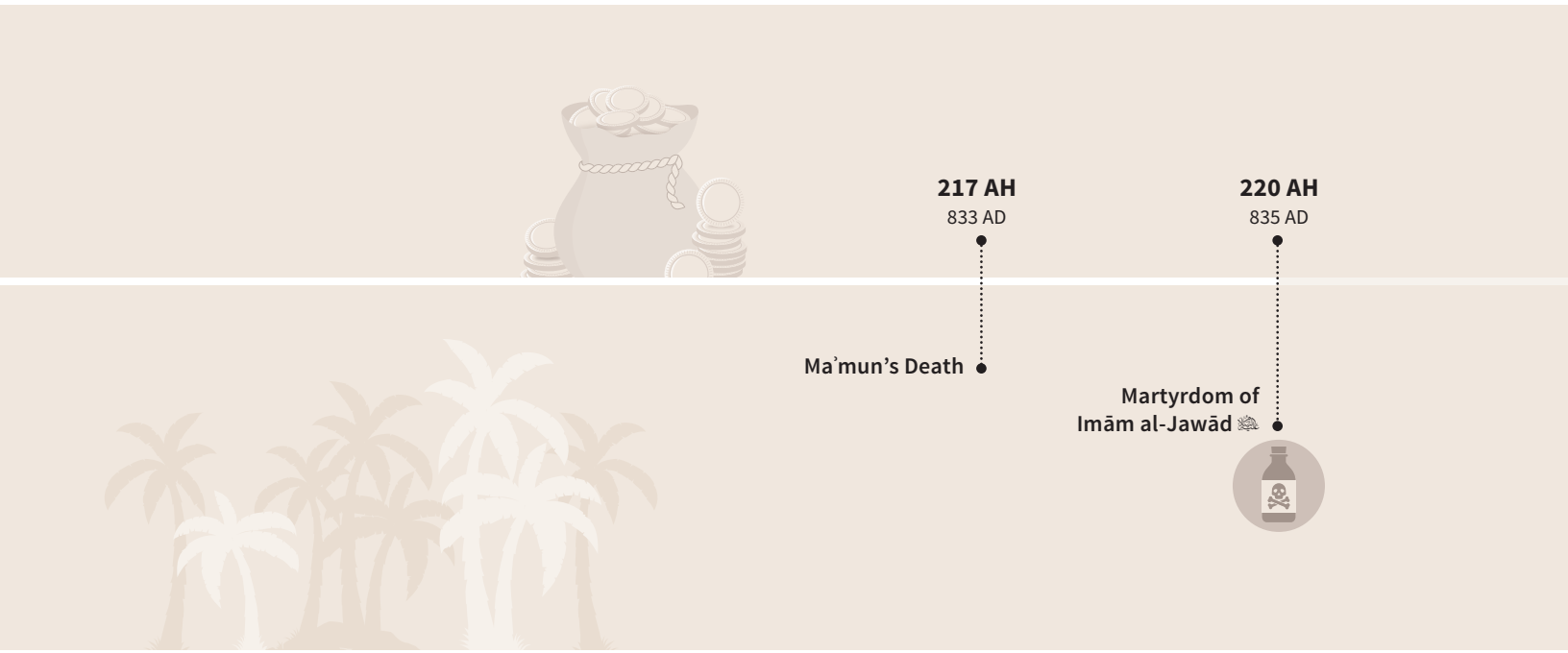
THE IMĀM'S EARLY MATURITY

It is Allah's decree that this world shall never be left without a Divinely-appointed guide. Thus, Imām al-Jawād ﷺ took his position of Divine leadership at the age of 8 years. The Shīʿah at that time could not help wondering how a child at that age could take on such a huge responsibility. Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ in response to them would remind them about the story of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ who was even younger when he became the Prophet of his time.[1] Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ paved the way and set the foundation at the time so the transition at such a young age would be easier for Imām al-Jawād ﷺ.

A companion of Imām al-Jawād ﷺ narrates how he was looking at the Imām ﷺ quite closely so that he could describe him to the believers in his home land of Egypt. While he was doing this, the Imām ﷺ sat down with him (as if he was reading his mind) and said:

> *O ʿAlī, Allah has appointed Imāms as proofs, just as He appointed Prophets as proofs, when He said: 'And We gave him wisdom while he was a boy' [referring to Sūrah Maryam (19), Verse 13], 'and when he reached maturity' [Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verse 22], and 'when he reached forty years' [Sūrah al-Aḥqāf (46), Verse 15]. Therefore it is possible for wisdom to be granted to one while he is still a boy, as it is possible for it to be granted when he is forty.*[2]

1 Shaykh Kulayni, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 11, P. 321.
2 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 1, P. 384.



THE IMĀM'S KNOWLEDGE

Many people doubted how such a young boy could be the Imām ﷺ, but they were convinced when they asked Imām al-Jawād ﷺ their perplexing questions, and he was able to answer all of them.

The oppressive caliph Maʾmūn forcefully married his daughter, Umm Faḍl, to Imām al-Jawād ﷺ. One of his motivations in doing so was that Maʾmūn was hoping that the children of Imām al-Jawād ﷺ from his daughter would become the next Imāms ﷺ, and therefore be his grandchildren. However, according to the Will of Allah ﷻ, Imām al-Jawād ﷺ had children (with other wives), but he did not have children with the daughter of Maʾmūn.

When Maʾmūn first wanted his daughter to marry Imām al-Jawād ﷺ, the other elders of the Banū ʿAbbās opposed him. They argued that the marriage would result in a loss of prestige and political power for them. When Maʾmūn refused to accept their advice, they then used the young age of the Imām ﷺ as an excuse.

Maʾmūn's real motive behind this marriage was an attempt to control the Imām ﷺ. They asked Maʾmūn to delay the marriage until the 9th Imām ﷺ had studied Islamic Jurisprudence sufficiently. In response, Maʾmūn arranged for a widely publicized debate in his court between the young Imām ﷺ and Yaḥyā ibn Aktham, the head of the judges. He was the person whom everyone considered to be the most learned scholar of that time.

At this debate, Yaḥyā asked Imām al-Jawād ﷺ jurisprudential questions that he thought would be difficult for the Imām ﷺ to answer. Not only did the Imām ﷺ reply to all of his questions, he asked Yaḥyā some questions that Yaḥyā was unable to answer. Soon, Yaḥyā was sitting before the young Imām ﷺ very humbly, like a student before a grand master—asking the Imām ﷺ to teach him. As a result, all those present admitted the superiority of Imām's knowledge, and the marriage formula was recited then and there.[3]

POLITICAL SITUATION

Throughout the lives of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, they were always met with strong opposition from the tyrannical rulers of their time. Each Imām ﷺ had to work against rulers who used their political powers for personal gain. Some of these rulers were outwardly jealous and evil, while others from the outside pretended to be with the Imām ﷺ and the people, but would deceive people with their cunning personalities and behaviors.

The ʿAbbāsid ruler at that time was Maʾmūn, who was later succeeded by his brother, Muʿtaṣim. Maʾmūn had a softer approach toward the Imām ﷺ. This was not because he loved the Imām ﷺ, but instead he wanted to use the popularity of the Imām ﷺ for his own selfish and political interests. Maʾmūn, despite his cunningness, was aware that the family of the Prophet ﷺ had a special type of knowledge which should be appreciated and known to other people, so as long as power remained in his hands and his authority remained supreme, he used the Imām's greatness to serve his own purpose.

Maʾmūn began a policy of reconciliation with the ʿAbbāsid elders, and also with those who had inclinations toward the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ in order to attract more popularity for himself. There was freedom of speech and expression which resulted in open discussions on main issues which were previously considered taboo. Maʾmūn encouraged the intellectuals to engage in open discussions about the concept of power and authority. He summoned the Imām ﷺ to come to Baghdad, but he did not stay for long and returned back to Medina.

On the other hand, Muʿtaṣim was extremely jealous of Imām al-Jawād ﷺ due to his popularity among the people. When he took power, he immediately summoned the 9th Imām ﷺ to Baghdād. Then he plotted to kill the Imām ﷺ, and eventually was able to influence the wife of Imām al-Jawād ﷺ, Ummul Fadl—who was the daughter of Maʾmūn and niece of Muʿtaṣim—to poison him, showing his evil intentions from the very beginning.

3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 50, Pp. 75-76.

Despite the tyrannical and oppressive nature of the ʿAbbāsid regime, Imām al-Jawād ﷺ did whatever he could to help his companions in both simple and complex matters. A man from Sajistān accompanied the Imām ﷺ on a journey to *Ḥajj*. While on that journey, the man said that the governor of his state claimed to be a follower and lover of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. He asked the Imām ﷺ: "May I be sacrificed for you, if you see fit, would you write to him to treat me well?" The Imām ﷺ said: "I do not know him." The companion persisted in his request, so the Imām ﷺ wrote to the governor:

> *In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful. The one who is carrying my letter to you said to me that you have a beautiful belief. Be aware, that only your good actions will remain with you, so be good to your brothers, and know that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, will ask you about even the weight of an atom and a seed…*[4]

As this man was returning home with the letter, the governor became aware of it, so he went out of the city to meet the man, kissed the letter of the Imām ﷺ, considered it to be a great honor for him, and gave this man whatever he wanted.

CHARACTERS AND VIRTUES

Members of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ are perfect manifestations of the Divine Attributes of Allah ﷻ. The 9th Imām, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ﷺ, was famously known as *al-Jawād*—the Generous One—which is an Attribute of Allah ﷻ because of his open-handedness toward people. *Jawād* comes from the word *Jūd* which means 'generosity which springs from mercy, and is expressed with no expectation for any reward and no ulterior motive.'[5] Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād ﷺ was eloquent in his speech and very generous, gentle, and humble. He would often go around distributing food and money to the needy. Imām al-Jawād ﷺ also taught us that generosity is not only with material goods. As Muslims, we can be generous with our skills and emotions as well, and use our qualities to help others.

Generosity is a very lofty characteristic that everyone should aspire to and work hard to develop. It involves giving all forms of whatever a person possesses in terms of wealth, time, abilities, and knowledge to those who are in need of it. The opposite of being generous is to be stingy.

JAWĀD comes from the word **JŪD** which means 'generosity that springs from mercy, and is expressed with no expectation for any reward and no ulterior motive.'

Generosity involves giving all forms of whatever a person possesses in terms of wealth, time, abilities, and knowledge to those who are in need of it.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

When we think about generosity, we often associate it with monetary value and charities. Write different ways that a person can be generous even if they do not have money. Try to think outside the box, what does a generous person do?

4 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 5, P. 111.

5 https://rasekhoon.net/lifestyle/show/1501783/ساده-زیستی-و-بخشش-در-سیره-امام-جواد-ع

In another *ḥadīth*, it was reported that one year, Aḥmad ibn Ḥadīd, and some of his companions set out to perform *Ḥajj*. On their way, some robbers attacked them and robbed all the money and luggage they had. When they arrived in Yathrib, Aḥmad ibn Ḥadīd went to Imām al-Jawād ﷺ and told him about what had happened to him and his companions. Imām ﷺ gave him some clothes and a sum of money to be distributed among his companions. The sum of money was the exact amount that had been robbed from them. Imām al-Jawād ﷺ saved them from their distress and recompensed them for what had been taken away from them.[6]

The Imām ﷺ was also generous and kind when it came to the emotions of his followers. He was attentive to their feelings, and made them feel better and hopeful in times of affliction and hardship. When one of his companion's son died at a young age, the Imām ﷺ wrote to him:

> *I heard about your affliction and the death of your son, ʿAlī, and I remembered how he was the most beloved of your sons to you. Thus does Allah, the Exalted, take from a believer's children and property the best from among them, so that He can increase the reward of the afflicted believer. May Allah increase your reward, and make good your grief, and strengthen your heart, for He is the All-Powerful. May Allah soon grant you another child…* [7]

DIMENSIONS OF GENEROSITY

Generosity can be practiced in almost every aspect of our lives. In this lesson, we will focus on material generosity—that is, giving from our possessions and time, or expertise for the goodness and betterment of others.

Examples include:

- Giving money or food to someone in need.
- Inviting guests to our home for a meal and a pleasant gathering. This can increase love among the believers.
- Sponsoring gatherings for the remembrance of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, or in the memory of family members or other believers who have passed away. Giving a good loan to a friend who needs money to start a business, or who is going through hard times. A good loan means that we do not ask them for anything in return,[8] or hold any obligation over them, or make them feel bad.
- Donating to charitable causes, such as:
  - ▷ Orphanages
  - ▷ Organizations that help the poor and needy
  - ▷ Masājid or Islamic centres
  - ▷ Islamic schools or other organizations that promote the truth of Islam
- Contributing our time and efforts to help any of the causes above.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

With a partner, come up with a list of good causes which may be deserving of our generosity. Try to make your list practical such that you can implement them within your own community. What specifically about these things on your list make them a good start to becoming a kind-hearted and generous person?

6 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 12, P. 109.
7 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 3, P. 218.
8 Giving someone a loan and charging interest on that money given is forbidden *(ḥarām)* in Islam.

COMPLETING OUR GENEROSITY

There are certain things that make our generosity even more worthy, as sometimes it is not easy to be generous. These include:

- Giving even during times of difficulty.
- Giving without expecting anything or any reward in return.
- Belittling the act (not thinking much about it, nor feeling arrogant as a result of giving the charity).
- Giving secretly.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said:
"The best form of generosity is the one given in spite of hardship."[9]

The Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ were habituated to going outside in the later parts of the night with a sack full of bread, meat, and money. They used to carry it on the back of their necks, and take it to those in need. Only after they passed away did people come to know that it was the Imām ﷺ of the time who was being so generous and charitable toward them. Imām al-Jawād ﷺ was the crystallisation of this lofty virtue.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is it important to do these acts of generosity without recognition and in secrecy?

Painting by: Hassan RouholAmin

9 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, No.3850.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said:

A person's open-handedness will endear them even by their opponents, and a person's stinginess will make them be hated even by their own children.

MERITS OF BEING GENEROUS

- One of the best merits of being generous is that it totally purges the soul of the destructive characteristic of stinginess. Stinginess can only be removed by habituating the self to give away wealth or whatever one is attached to. A person will become purified in proportion to how much wealth one gives away,[10] and in proportion to one's happiness at spending it for the sake of Allah ﷻ.
- Another merit of generosity is that it will cause people to love the one who is generous, and others will enjoy their company:

  Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: "A person's open-handedness will endear them (cause them to be loved) even by their opponents, and a person's stinginess will make them be hated even by their own children." [11]
- Being generous is the best form of gratitude for the blessings of Allah ﷻ. How vile is a person who looks at a poor individual—seeing how tough their circumstances are, and how the poor person is even needier than oneself—yet does not allow themselves to give whatever they can, and also exercise thankfulness to Allah ﷻ for making them needless of begging.

MODERATION IN GENEROSITY

It is also very important that we do not go to either extreme. So although we should not be stingy, we must not spend everything we have on others and be left with nothing for ourselves. Allah ﷻ instructs us in the Noble Qurʾān about this:

And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, such that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty. [12]

Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ﷺ said:
"Generosity has a limit, which if exceeded will become excessiveness *(isrāf)*." [13]

THE 9TH IMĀM'S DEATH

When Maʾmūn died, he was succeeded by his brother, Muʿtaṣim, who ruled from Baghdād. He had Imām al-Jawād ﷺ arrested in Medina and brought to Baghdād where he kept him under house arrest before having him poisoned. According to most accounts, he was poisoned by his wife—who was the daughter of Maʾmūn—by the command of Muʿtaṣim. Becoming martyred at the age of only 25, the 9th Imām ﷺ had the shortest lifespan out of all the Imāms ﷺ. Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād ﷺ is buried next to his grandfather, Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ, in Kāẓimayn (which is a suburb of Baghdād).

10 This does not mean in a quantitative way, such that a person who gives more money will be purified more, rather it depends on one's sincerity of giving, and proportionate to how much an individual has.
11 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, No. 4729.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 29.
13 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 75, P. 377.

Activity 2.7a: Spreading our Generosity

You have been selected as your class leader to begin a campaign about generosity. Your task is to teach not only your class, but the entire school about generosity, and how to begin being generous. Using the lessons thus far from this lesson, create a digital presentation on generosity. Remember to consult the rubric below to ensure that you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 **Ineffective**	2 **Somewhat Effective**	3 **Considerably Effective**	4 **Highly Effective**
Graphics	Graphics do not make the topic easier to understand and/or have no sources.	Most graphics relate to the topic and most have a source cited.	Most graphics are related to the topic and make it easier to understand. All graphics have a source cited.	All graphics are directly related to the topic and all borrowed graphics have a source cited.
Grammar	There are 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There are 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There are 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There are no grammatical mistakes in the poster/script.
Islamic Principles / Accuracy	Content does not meet Islamic Principles.	Content meets Islamic Principles however, there is a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented meets almost all Islamic Principles mentioned above while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented suits all Islamic Principles mentioned above while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Presentation was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Presentation was presented somewhat creatively but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Presentation was presented in an engaging manner but lacked neatness.	Presentation was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	The presentation is not convincing or compelling.	The presentation is somewhat convincing or compelling.	Presentation is convincing and meets expected requirements	The presentation is extremely compelling and convincing.

Activity 2.7b: Review Questions

1. At what age did the 9th Imām ﷺ become the Imām? How did he show his vast knowledge despite his young age?

2. Explain in your own words, some proof from the Noble Qurʾān, about how a representative of Allah ﷻ can be a child.

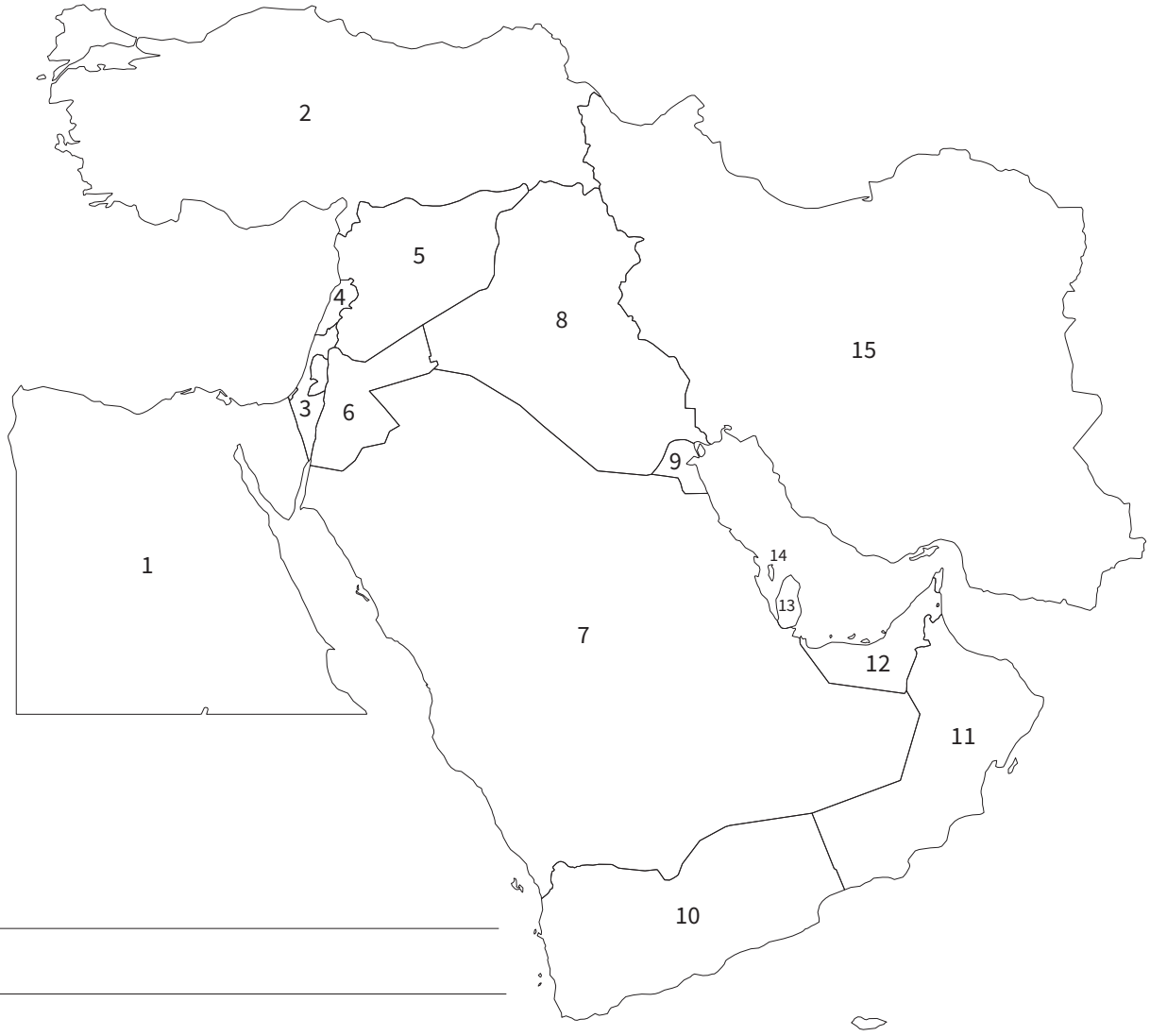
3. How come Imām al-Jawād ﷺ is buried in Kāẓimayn, Iraq, when the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ are originally from Medina?

4. How can a person become generous? Give an example from the life of Imām al-Jawād ﷺ.

5. Why is moderation in generosity important? What can happen if a person is either too generous or not generous at all?

Activity 2.7c: Geography Assignment

Using the map of the Middle East (West Asia), label each country. Once you have labelled the countries, on the lines beside the corresponding country in which they are buried write the names of the Imāms ﷺ that you have learned about thus far.



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2.8 Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Review the concept of waiting *(intidhār)* and the roles of the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.
- Discuss and compare the government of justice versus our current world today.
- Understand our duties to our Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف as we wait for his reappearance.
- Learn the sequence of his reappearance *(ẓuhūr)* through some of the narrations *(aḥādīth)*.

REAPPEARANCE OF THE FINAL IMĀM عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

In order to truly await and prepare (do *intidhār)* for the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, we have to actively lay the groundwork for his return. This should not be a new concept to us, since we have discussed this in prior lessons.

One of the roles of the Imāms عليهم السلام is to establish a just government for the people. This right to lead can only come from Allah ﷻ, and without it, injustice will prevail in the society. This is because only Allah ﷻ can determine who is fit to lead. A leader must be God-conscious, have knowledge, and be able to govern with justice.

In the comfort of our own homes and our lives, we may not realize that there is widespread corruption in society, but as Muslims and servants of Allah ﷻ, we have to think about more than just ourselves.

Sometimes when we watch the news, we might feel upset about what is happening around the world and not know what to do. It can make us feel helpless, but if we prepare for the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف by fulfilling our responsibilities—like doing what is obligatory *(wājib)* and staying away from what is forbidden *(ḥarām)*—then it is a way of assisting the oppressed, and helping to bring about a better world. The biggest helper to the oppressed will be the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف himself who will establish universal justice throughout the earth. In the meantime, we can try to help in whatever way we can, but what is most important is being our best selves, and trying to get closer to Allah ﷻ. We can also fulfill our responsibilities during the occultation of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف by:

- **Know the Imām** عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. We should try to find out as much as we can about the reality of the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, because there is a narration which states that the one who dies without knowing the Imām عليه السلام of their time dies the death of ignorance and disbelief.
- **Showing love for the Imām** عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. Give charity on his behalf; attend gatherings where he is mentioned; do good deeds and gift that to him; etc.
- **Develop an emotional connection with the Imām** عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف through the recitation of special supplications and prayers for the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.
- **Show your knowledge and love in actions.** Perform those deeds that you think the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف would want you to do. Acquire the beautiful traits that you know he possesses, and rid yourself of the characteristics that would be displeasing to him. Involve yourself in projects and programs that you think improve the community, and that the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف would approve of.

STOP AND REFLECT: How does performing one's compulsory actions *(wājibāt)*, fulfilling one's responsibilities, and refraining from the forbidden deeds *(muḥarramāt)*, help to bring about a better world?

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said about the end of times:

> *There will come a time for people that they will not respect their scholars except for their good clothing; they will not hearken to the Noble Qurʾān except for the pleasant voice [that some people recite it with]; and they will not worship Allah except for during the fasting month [month of Ramaḍān]; there will be no shyness in their women; no patience in their poor ones; and no prosperity for their rich ones—they will not be contented with a small (portion), nor will they be satiated with abundance. They will strive (only) for their stomach; their religion will be their money (wealth); their women will be their Qiblah (direction of worship); and their homes will be their masājid; they will run away from their scholars just as lambs run away from wolves.*
>
> *When they become like that, then the Lord will afflict them with three things. First, He will take away the blessings from their properties. Second, a cruel ruler will dominate over them. Third, they will pass away from this world without having (true) faith.* [1]

We also have another *ḥadīth* from the Prophet ﷺ where he said:

> "A time will come for people that for those who practice their religion, will be like those who hold hot coal in their hand." [2]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Does what the Prophet ﷺ said sound like our society nowadays? What are some examples you can think of to back up this *ḥadīth*? Discuss with a partner. Now look at both of the above *aḥādīth* together about the time of waiting for the Imām عجل الله فرجه. Fill in the following chart. Be prepared to explain your answers with the class.

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 22, P. 454.
2 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 28.

ḤADĪTH (TRANSLATION/MEANING)	EVIDENCE FROM OUR OWN SOCIETIES	WAYS TO SAFEGUARD OUR FAITH AND RELIGION

It is very important for us to hold on to our faith during this difficult time, and be aware that even if we may not always feel it in our day-to-day lives, the world is filled with so much oppression and imbalance which will only be fixed when the Imām عجل الله فرجه returns.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD THE 12TH IMĀM عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

INTIDHĀR:
waiting/anticipation

The final Messenger ﷺ said: "The best action of my nation *(ummah)* is to be in the state of waiting/anticipation *(intidhār)* of the deliverance [*faraj*—through the re-emergence of the Imām]."[3]

Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī ؑ said: "The Earth is never without a Ḥujjatullāh (a proof of Allah) over His creation. Certainly, a person who dies without knowing the Imām of one's time, will die the death of ignorance *(jāhiliyyah)*."[4]

When we will be asked in our grave who our Imām ؑ is, we have to truly know and believe it. What does it mean to truly know our Imām ؑ? First, it means to understand Allah ﷻ and His Message, which establishes the need for Prophethood, and helps us recognize the Prophets ؑ sent by Him. We then need to have an understanding of the concept of Imamate, which can help us recognize the 12 Divinely-appointed Imāms ؑ. Once we have this understanding, then we can strengthen it by having God-consciousness *(taqwā)*, by doing what is obligatory *(wājib)* and staying away from what is forbidden *(ḥarām)*. Gradually, we will become closer to Allah ﷻ and the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف of our time; and if a number of people do this, then the 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will have his true followers that he requires, and will be able to reappear from his occultation. We should strive to be amongst these followers who are the closest to our living Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. We all have the potential to be a close companion of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف if we strive hard.

STOP AND REFLECT: List some ways that you can gradually become closer to the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The Mahdī will be from my children. His name will be (the same as) my name and his title *(kunyah)* will be (the same as) my title *(kunyah)*. He will be the most similar to me in appearance and manners. He will be in occultation, and there will be confusion during that time which will cause the nations to be misguided. He will then come (reappear) like a flaming fire of piercing brightness. He will fill it (the world) with justice and equity, just as it was filled with oppression and tyranny."[5]

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said:

> "Indeed for us, the Ahlul Bayt, there is a government that Allah will bring about when He desires. Whoever desires to be among the companions of the Qāʾim should be in a state of anticipation *(intidhār)*, act with extreme care, be God-conscious, and practice good moral virtues *(akhlāq)*."[6]

3 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Niʾmah,* P. 644.
4 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 51, P. 160.
5 *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Niʾmah*, Vol. 1, P. 314.
6 Al-Nuʿmānī, Muḥammad, *Al-Ghaybah*, Vol. 1, P. 200.

ẒUHŪR OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

The *Ẓuhūr* (reappearance) of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف refers to the end of the Major Occultation *(Ghaybatul Kubrā)*. It is when the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will no longer be hidden from people. A similar term, the *khurūj* (reemergence) of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, refers to when he will openly carry out the mission that Allah ﷻ has entrusted him with which is to spread justice and eliminate injustice. In essence, the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will first do his *Ẓuhūr*—meaning that he will reappear; then it will be his *khurūj*—when he will carry out his mission. From the *ḥadīth* of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام, we know some of the major events that will lead up to the return of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

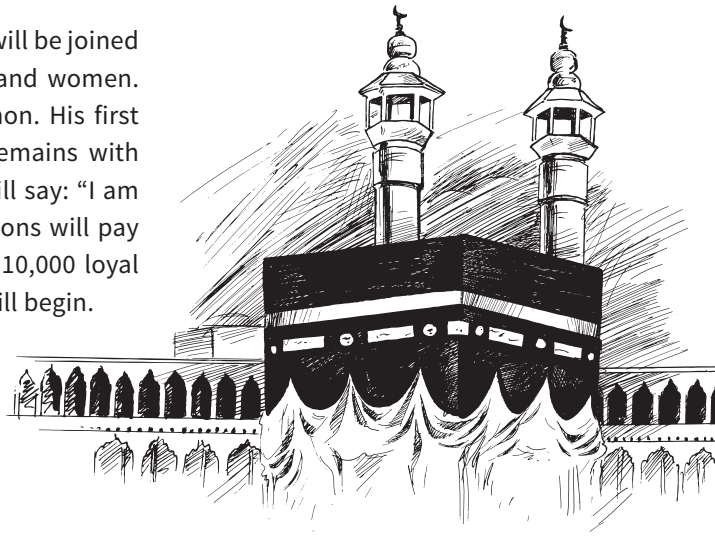
ẒUHŪR: reappearance; when Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will no longer be hidden from people.

KHURŪJ: reemergence; when Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will openly carry out Allah's mission of spreading justice and eliminating injustice.

Before the uprising of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, a man from the progeny of Abū Sufyān will have an uprising in the area of modern day Syria. He will send an army to try to capture or kill the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, but his army will sink into the earth miraculously by the Will of Allah ﷻ.

Close to the reappearance of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف, there will be a call from heaven which everyone on Earth will hear. The message will be inviting all of humanity to the Truth and encouraging them to support Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف. The elite and true companions of Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will make their way toward the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف.

The Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will then announce his reappearance from the Kaʿbah. He will be joined with 313 of his close companions from around the world—both men and women. He will lean his back against the Kaʿbah, then deliver a powerful sermon. His first words will be the verse from the Qur'ān which states: "That which remains with Allah *(Baqiyyatullāh)* is better for you, if you are believers." [7] Then he will say: "I am *Baqiyyatullāh* on the Earth." Angel Jibrāʾīl and the 313 sincere companions will pay allegiance to him there, and others will begin to gather as well. When 10,000 loyal soldiers have assembled there, the time for his global mission *(khurūj)* will begin.

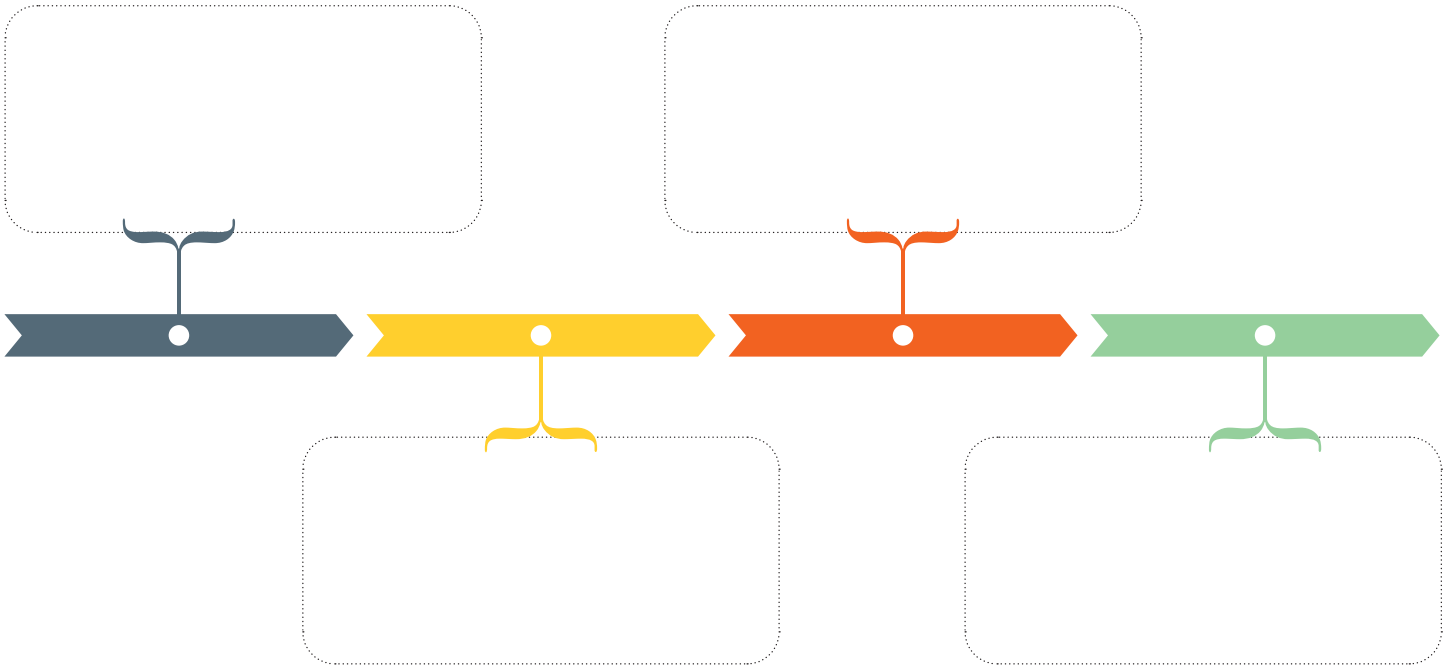


Similar to the time of the other Imāms عليهم السلام, there will be tyrants who will not want Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف to take his place and establish a government of justice. The Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will go toward Kūfah, but there will be a group of people who will oppose him and fight against his army. His army will be made up of true believers, and they will be victorious.

7 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Hūd (11), Verse 86.

Activity 2.8a: Timeline

Create a timeline to sequence the *ḥadīth* of the *Ẓuhūr* of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ.



This is a time that some of us may fear or worry about, but the reality is that we are already in a battle with the oppressors; and it is only when the Imām ﷺ returns—if we are with him—that we will be victorious. This is something that happened during the time of all the Imāms ﷺ, and as Muslims, this is one of our tests, just as it was with the people during the era of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ. We should try to be like his close companions, who stayed with the 3rd Imām ﷺ even when he blew out the candle and told his companions that they were free to go and that Allah ﷻ would forgive them. When we shed tears for Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ and his companions, we should pray that we are able to be amongst the companions of our 12th Imām ﷺ during this time, even though it is difficult. At times it may be easy for us to think that our society is in a good state, yet the reality is that without the presence of our Imām ﷺ, we are truly at a loss. Although we have indirect guidance from him in different forms, such as guidance from our scholars *(ʿulamā')*, and the Imām's 'presence all around us' even during occultation; however, having direct guidance from him would be at a different level. For example, when we go for *ziyārah*, we can feel the presence of the Imāms ﷺ at their Shrines *(Ḥarams).* In Muḥarram, we can feel the presence of the Imāms ﷺ and a change often occurs within ourselves. In these places and times, we feel the presence of our Imāms ﷺ, and no matter how many sins we have, we can feel the mercy and acceptance of our Imāms ﷺ with us.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Think of one of the stories of the companions of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ that you find motivational. What characteristics of them do you find motivational? How can you use the inspiration from the companion of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ to become a companion for Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ? Discuss with a partner.

A GOVERNMENT OF JUSTICE

After the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ in Mecca, the oath of allegiance to him, and formation of his initial army, he will head to Medina, then toward Kūfah in Iraq.

Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ said:

> "The fourth of my descendants…will purify the Earth of all evil and injustice." [8]

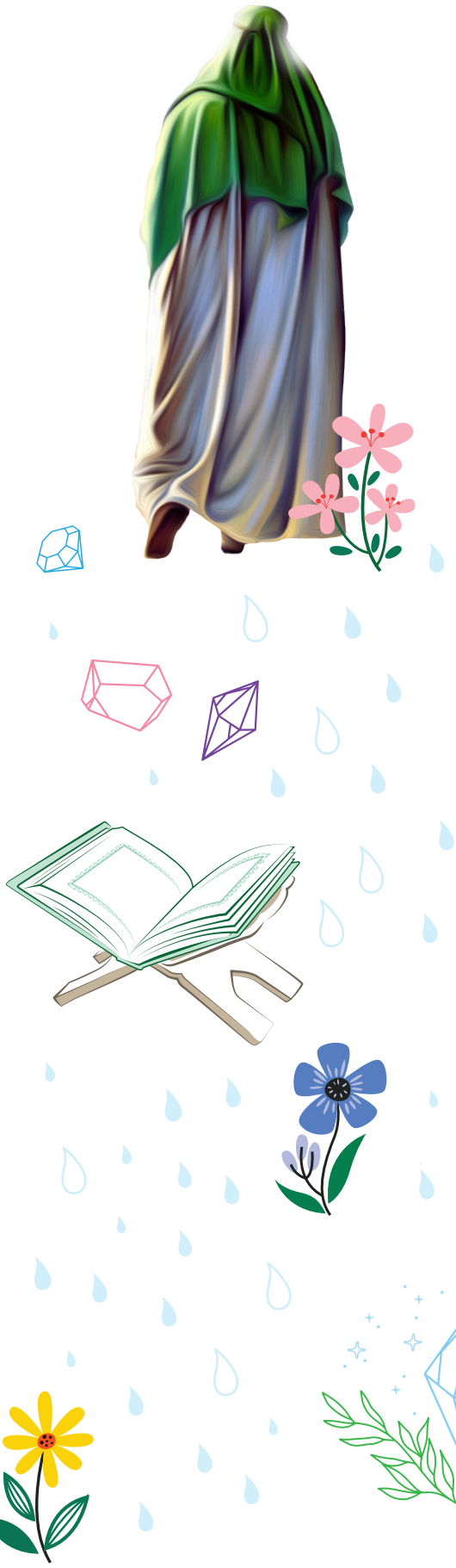
The entire world will be under the control of the righteous ones. The 12th Imām ﷺ will divide everything equally, and will deal with all of Allah's creations with absolute justice. Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Ansārī [9] said [quoting one of the Maʿṣūmīn] that:

> *...During the uprising of the Qā'im from among us, the Ahlul Bayt, he will distribute property evenly and will behave justly with them (the people). Thus, anyone who follows him will actually be following Allah, and anyone who disobeys him will actually be disobeying Allah. In view of this, he will be called the Mahdī—the Guided One—as he has guidance with respect to hidden affairs and issues.*[10]

There will be unprecedented development of Earth without destroying the ecosystem or the natural balance that Allah ﷻ wants to be maintained. The Imām ﷺ will use the natural resources of this world in an ideal fashion in which everyone will benefit. Planet Earth will cooperate with him and show its [hidden] treasures in such a way that the people will see them on its surface. The heavens will send down rain, and the earth will send forth its best greenery and plants. Material blessings will be used to get closer to Allah ﷻ.

The religion of Monotheism *(Tawhīd)* will spread throughout the entire Earth. The Noble Qurʾān, prayers, and masājid will occupy their true place in the hearts and minds of people. Learning the Noble Qurʾān will become common practice. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: "It is as though I am looking at our Shīʿahs in the Masjid of Kūfah, and they have set up tents and are teaching people the Qurʾān as it was revealed." [11]

The masājid will be the centers of learning, and prayers will be upheld as the pillar of religion. During the reign of the 12th Imām ﷺ, religious knowledge will grow in leaps and bounds. He will make people familiar with Allah ﷻ, and inspire His remembrance in the hearts of people. They will also be very God-conscious and develop the best of manners and etiquettes. They will finally escape the horror of self-worship, following the tyrants, and obeying their open enemy, Satan; and come to enjoy the pleasures of submitting to and serving the only true deity worthy of worship—Allah ﷻ.



8 *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Ni'mah,* Vol. 12, P. 372.
9 He was a great companion who lived during the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ who was blessed with a long life, such that he met the 5th Imām ﷺ—whom the Prophet ﷺ conveyed his salutations to—through him (Jābir).
10 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Ithbāt al-Hūdat*, Vol. 5, P. 515.
11 *Al-Ghaybah*, Vol. 1, P. 317.

THE GOVERNMENT OF IMĀM AL-MAHDĪ عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف

The time of the Imām's government will be a time of happiness and joy—where oppression, pressures, and persecution will cease to exist. People will turn to Allah ﷻ and live peaceful, tranquil lives.

Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ؑ said: "The Mahdī will emerge at a time of hopelessness and despair. Blessed is the one who is present at the time of his reappearance and joins the ranks of his helpers. Woe be to the one who opposes him and his commands, and is among his enemies." [12]

It will be a time of great material blessings as well.

There is a narration from the Prophet ﷺ which states: "My nation will enjoy bounties at the time of the Mahdī which they have never enjoyed prior to that time. The sky will pour down its blessings upon them, and the earth will spring forth everything that is planted in it." [13]

It will be a time of great honor, and will end the degradation of the Muslims.

The Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will be a true leader, who will use his God-given position and strength only to serve all of humanity and creation on a whole.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "He (the Mahdī) will be cautious of Allah. He will not place one stone over another [to build luxurious buildings], and will not strike anyone with a whip except in just judicial punishments." [14]

At the same time, the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will be very kind and compassionate toward the people, such that they will turn to him for all of their needs.

The Prophet ﷺ also said: "They will turn to the Mahdī as bees seek refuge in their leader." [15]

The 12th Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will remove all polytheism, and establish a system of Islam universally. He will bring back the original Tawrāh[16] and Injīl,[17] and use these to argue against the Jews and Christians. Most of them will revert to Islam except for a small and stubborn minority.

Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will unify all Muslims under the banner of true Islam that the Prophet ﷺ practiced. The Prophet ﷺ said about the final Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف: "His practice will be my practice, and he will rule people according to my legislation and practice." [18]

The Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will remove all innovations that have been introduced into Islam and will overcome all seditions. He will begin by removing innovations, beginning with the innovations in *Masjid al-Ḥarām,* such as the separation of the imām of the prayer from their followers.

The Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will appoint representatives and workers to implement his governance all around the world. He will be harsh and strict with them if need be in order to ensure that they do not become corrupt.

The Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف will also be just in distributing wealth equally to all people, without giving people political or racial preference. The narrations also mention that he will give generously whenever he is asked.

12 *Al-Ghaybah*, Vol. 1, P. 253.
13 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 51, P. 83.
14 Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, *At-Tashrīf bil Minan,* Vol. 1, P. 264.
15 Muttaqī Hindī, *Al-Burhān*, P. 78. (Ahlus Sunnah Source)
16 The Scripture given to Prophet Mūsā ؑ.
17 The Scripture given to Prophet ʿĪsā ؑ.
18 *Kamāl ad-Dīn wa Tamām an-Niʿmah*, P. 411.

Activity 2.8b: The World after the Reappearance (Ẓuhūr)

DIRECTIONS: Based on what we have learned in this lesson, compare and contrast the differences in our world today compared to the what the world will be like after the reappearance *(Ẓuhūr)* of the 12th Imām عجل الله فرجه الشريف. Fill in the chart below.

OUR WORLD TODAY	WORLD AFTER THE ẒUHŪR
	He will distribute property evenly.
	The Imām عجل الله فرجه الشريف will use the natural resources of the world in an ideal fashion in which everyone will benefit.
	The masājid will be the center of learning, and prayers will be upheld as a pillar of religion.
	There will be justice for everyone.

Activity 2.8c: Comic Strip

Create a comic strip highlighting the government of Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ. Include at least two points from this lesson.

COMIC STRIP RUBRIC

Use the rubric below to ensure that you have included all of the necessary components.

	1 Ineffective	2 Somewhat Effective	3 Considerably Effective	4 Highly Effective
Graphics	Graphics did not make the topic of the comic easier to understand.	Most graphics were related to the topic.	Most graphics were related to the topic, and made it easier to understand.	All graphics were directly related to the topic.
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes in the comic strip.
Islamic Principles/ Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic principles.	Content met the Islamic principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all Islamic of the principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Comic strip was distractingly messy and/or lacked design.	Comic strip presented was somewhat creative, but left the audience wanting more in terms of design and neatness.	Comic strip was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Comic strip was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented did not function as a comic strip.	The comic strip was not convincing or compelling.	Comic strip was well done and convincing.	Comic strip was extremely compelling and convincing.

Activity 2.8d: Review Questions

1. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said:

   Indeed for us, the Ahlul Bayt, there is a government that Allah will bring about when He desires. Whoever desires to be among the companions of the Qā'im should be in the state of anticipation (intidhār), act with extreme care, and be God-conscious, and practice good morals (akhlāq).[19]

   What do you think this *ḥadīth* means? How can we try to ensure that we act with the care and God-consciousness that Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is talking about?

2. Describe the Government of Justice that will be established when Imām al-Mahdī عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف reappears.

19 *Al-Ghaybah*, Vol. 1, P. 200.

3. When the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف announces his reappearance, where will he be? What is the *āyah* that he will recite, and what does it mean? Write down the verse.

4. Why do you think the occultation of the Imām عجل الله تعالى فرجه الشريف has gone on for so long? What can we do to hasten and prepare for his *Ẓuhūr*?

5. How would you describe the concept of *intidhār* to your non-Muslim friend?

Activity 2.8e: Mini Presentation About Injustice Around the World

DIRECTIONS: Sometimes it is difficult for us to remember that injustice around the world is impacting us. Choose one example of injustice in the world today, and research what is happening there so that you can narrate it to your classmates. Then, explain how the world will be different when our 12th Imām ﷺ returns. Lastly, think of a prayer *(duʿāʾ)* that we can recite on a daily basis for this problem to be alleviated. Consult the rubric from your teacher.

WORLD PROBLEM: _____

Research	
How will it change when the Imām ﷺ returns?	
Prayer *(duʿāʾ)* we should recite every day.	

CHAPTER 3

History of Prophets عليهم السلام

3.1 Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام

3.2 Prophet Shuʿayb عليه السلام

3.3 Prophet ʿĪsā عليه السلام and Lady Maryam

3.1 Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn the story of Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ.
- Explain homosexual behavior from the Islamic perspective.
- Discuss modern theories used to advocate homosexual behavior.
- Discuss and explain the Islamic approach to dealing with homosexual behavior.

Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ was one of the Prophets who was sent by Allah ﷻ to guide humanity. He lived at the time of Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ. In fact, it was Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ who sent him to a certain village in order to guide its people. Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ is mentioned 27 times in the Noble Qurʾān, and his story is mentioned in 82 verses.

The emphasis of Prophet Lūṭ's story was the practice of his people—which was the practice of homosexual behavior—meaning sexual acts between people of the same gender. He preached to them for a long time, urging them to stop this indecent behavior and go back to their nature, but they did not heed his message and instead threatened him. They began to promote mischief and impose their ideology among the society. They did not listen to Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ, and stubbornly refused to accept his guidance. They continued with their perseverance in oppression and mischievous ways until there was no chance of them being guided, so Allah ﷻ sent His punishment upon them.

> *And Lūṭ, when he said to his people: 'Indeed, you commit an indecency none in the world has ever committed before you! What! Do you (men) come to other men (with lust), and cut off the way [they used to commit highway robberies and acts of aggression against the travelers], and commit outrages in your gatherings?' But the only answer of his people was that they said: 'Bring down upon us Allah's punishment, if you are truthful.' He (Lūṭ) said: 'My Lord, help me against these corruptive people.'*[1]

Allah ﷻ sent a group of angels to the village of Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ. They came to the Prophet ﷺ in the form of humans, and stayed with him as guests. Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ was scared that his people would assault them. He sneaked them into his house, but his wife (who was an evil woman) told the men of the village about the visitors, so they came to try and take the visitors.

Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ went so far as to offer the villagers his own daughters in marriage in order to bring them back to the right path of normal sexual relations between men and women. However, his people did not listen to him, and they tried to charge into his house. At that time, the visitors told Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ that they were angels sent by Allah ﷻ to punish his people.

> *And when Our messengers (angels) came to Lūṭ, he was distressed for them [as he feared what his people would do to them], and was in a predicament for their sake. They said: 'Have no fear, and do not grieve! Truly, we shall save you and your family, except your wife, she will be among those who remain behind.'*[2]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verses 28-30.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verse 33.

They advised Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ and his family to flee the village before the morning, which they did, except for his wife who remained behind and suffered punishment along with the people of that town. Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ and those who believed with him were saved, and the promise of Allah ﷻ to give help and victory to His Prophets ﷺ and supporters came true. In contrast, the stubborn people of that village—intent on their evil practices—met a difficult punishment.

> *And (as for) Lūṭ, We gave him wisdom and knowledge, and We delivered him from the town which was committing indecent deeds; surely they were an evil people, transgressors.*[3]
>
> *Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from the sky, because they have been transgressors. And indeed, We have left thereof an evident sign for people who understand (use reason).*[4]

In the rest of this lesson, we will discuss homosexual behavior from an Islamic Perspective.

ISLAM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS OPPOSE HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Homosexual behavior is becoming more and more common, and people are seeing it as something normal. Societies, especially in western countries, are allowing homosexual behavior to be legalized and implementing it into modern society as if it is a normal phenomenon—to the extent that it is protected by the law, seen as a regular practice through television characters and in books, and is even being taught within the secular school systems. However, the Injīl, the Bible, the Tawrāh, and the Noble Qurʾān, all oppose homosexual behavior.

ARE PEOPLE BORN WITH HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIORS?

Some people claim that scientifically, a person's genetic makeup can cause them to be homosexual at birth, and that such people have no choice in the matter.

However, the studies used to support this claim have major flaws in their designs and conclusions. In fact, a massive study conducted in 2019 showed that there is no single genetic cause of same-sex sexual behavior. Other studies also looked at multiple points within the genome to try to find a genetic cause for same-sex sexual behavior. However, these studies have not found any evidence that there is a genetic cause for this behavior.[5]

Even if there was a genetic factor involved, the most it could prove is a 'genetic predisposition,' not genetics as a determining factor for a person's sexual behavior. This means that a person may have a tendency or inclination to do something, but is forced or compelled to do that, and one still has a choice over their actions. This is similar to how some people are genetically predisposed to have anger problems, or addiction problems, or a disease such as schizophrenia. This does not mean that we should condone all their actions and disregard our standards for right and wrong. Instead, we must uphold our own standards and try to facilitate help for them so that they can return to their natural state.

It is also possible that a person's upbringing or experiences in life may influence one's attraction to someone of the same gender in a sexual manner. Individuals who have inclinations toward people of the same-sex have often experienced severe trauma in their childhood, and many experienced sexual abuse as children.[6] This may be a contributing factor or cause to having same-sex desires as adults. Often these kinds of desires are unwanted, and people choose to seek help to overcome them.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some of the dangers of homosexual behavior spiritually, and in society?

According to the teachings of Islam—which are supported by the innate nature *(fiṭrah)*—people are not born practicing homosexual behavior. Rather, certain events in life, or actions undertaken, can affect people negatively and they then choose such a lifestyle.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verse 74.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt (29), Verses 34-35.
5 https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/massive-study-finds-no-single-genetic-cause-of-same-sex-sexual-behavior/
6 https://openpsychologyjournal.com/contents/volumes/V3/TOPSYJ-3-36/TOPSYJ-3-36.pdf

THE DANGERS OF HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Someone asked Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ: "Why has Allah forbidden relations between the same genders?" He replied: "If sexual relationships with men [people of the same gender] were allowed, then men would have become needless of women. This would have led to a cease in reproduction and natural sexual relations between the two opposite genders, and in turn this would lead to many ethical and societal problems."[7]

Homosexual behavior is an unnatural act. The way human beings are created—physically, emotionally, and mentally—shows that they were formed to engage in intimate relations with the opposite gender only. When a person goes against this natural order, then it will certainly have negative results. It will create a physical and mental conflict within that person and entail great suffering.

Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā ﷺ said:

> "Fear and abandon adultery and homosexual behavior; and in fact, homosexual behavior is actually worse than adultery. These two sins will cause 72 pains for those who commit them in this world and the next."[8]

We also have to consider the long term impact on societies. Children are meant to be raised by a father (male) and a mother (female) so that their personalities remain balanced and healthy. If homosexual behavior continues to be condoned, then children will end up being raised by two males or two females, and this can lead to many negative effects on children brought up in such households. Additionally, because two males or two females cannot naturally conceive children, society will be forced into more unnatural and unethical ways of having children. This will also lead to major individual and societal problems.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What are some of the negative societal aspects of homosexual behavior? How is being raised by two men or two women a disservice to children? Make a list and share your answers with your partner. Be prepared to defend your position.

7 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah,* Vol. 14, Pp 252-253.
8 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil,* Vol. 14, P. 342.

What is the Medical Evidence on Illness Related to Homosexual Behavior?

- People who engage in homosexual behavior suffer from much higher rates of mental health problems than other people. They are more likely to be depressed and anxious.[9]
- People who engage in same gender sexual behaviors often have more sexual partners than average.[10]
- There is a higher level of domestic violence in these relationships.[11]
- People who engage in same gender sexual behaviors suffer from a much higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases as well. In developed countries, most people who suffer from HIV, AIDS, or other major sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis and gonorrhea are due to homosexual behavior. Doctors are educated to specifically screen those who practice homosexual behavior for these diseases more than others, and there are special health services dedicated to treating such people—all of which show that this lifestyle is a major contributor to contracting these types of diseases.[12]

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR APPROACH TO SAME-SEX ATTRACTION?

It is important to distinguish between people who have same-sex attraction, and those who engage in same-sex behavior. Even though we can take steps to avoid being attracted to others (for example, by being careful about one's glance), and through training and controlling our thoughts we can change what we are attracted to, some parts of attraction cannot be controlled. Therefore, someone who experiences same-sex sexual attraction might not have control over this attraction.

Others engage in same-sex behavior, and also at times make their same-sex preferences as part of their identity.

Sometimes, someone who is experiencing a level of same-sex attraction may reach out to us for help. In such situations, we should try to do what we can to help them by referring them to an expert.

There are some people however, who are beyond the stage of seeking help and are stubborn or proud of their homosexual behavior, and make it part of their identity. It is important not to sympathize with homosexual behavior and lifestyles, as it is not a solution that will help individuals or the society. We should not feel pressure from society to accept such acts. It is our duty as Muslims to take a stand on this issue and forbid evil by showing our disapproval in whatever way we can. It is also important to understand that it is not something which is within our innate nature *(fiṭrah)*, nor is it accepted by any Abrahamic religion.

Our duty in any society or country that we live in is to not take the law into our own hands. However, we have a right to have our own opinions, and we do not, and should not agree with homsexual behavior, just because it is considered legal in our country of residence. We have a fundamental right to express our beliefs and disagreements, without causing any harm such as physical aggression, insulting anyone, or disrespecting a single soul.

Those who try to promote homosexuality as an identity do so under the banner of human rights. However, to claim that human rights are defined by individual desires is quite dangerous and unfair. Many other minorities and practices are not protected under human right laws, for example, polygamy, or some religious observances. We have seen various debates and legislations regarding the banning of *ḥijāb* and *niqāb*,[13] which should in fact be considered as basic human rights.

9 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2016, February 29), *Mental health for gay and bisexual men*. Retrieved June 15, 2022, from https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/mental-health.htm

10 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2016, February 29), *Mental health for gay and bisexual men*. Retrieved June 15, 2022, from https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/mental-health.htm

11 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2016, February 29), *Mental health for gay and bisexual men*. Retrieved June 15, 2022, from https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/mental-health.htm

12 Boskey, E. (n.d.), *Understanding why gay men have an increased risk of HIV*, Verywell Health. Retrieved June 15, 2022, from https://www.verywellhealth.com/why-do-gay-men-have-an-increased-risk-of-hiv-3132782

13 This is a face covering, where either the entire face is covered, or else the face is covered with the exception of the eyes which can be seen.

Activity 3.1a: Scenarios

1. You (Ali) just moved into a new house, and now you attend another school. After quite some time, you finally make a new friend, Justin. One day, Justin tells you proudly that he is gay (and has adopted a homosexual identity). As a believer, you know that homosexual behavior is a grave sin, and you should not support Justin in his actions and speech in what he is proudly saying. What do you think is the best way to go about this subject? In what way can you take a stand on the issue, while still maintaining required school conduct?

2. In your city, there is a Pride Parade to support the gay community. Your secular friends ask you to go out with them to "see" the parade and go out for lunch afterwards. What will you do?

Activity 3.1b: Review Questions

1. In your own words, write a brief summary about the life of Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ.

2. How many times has Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ been mentioned in the Qurʾān? Find one verse and write out the translation of it.

3. What are some of the negative consequences of homosexual behavior on a secular/worldly level?

4. In your own words, what does Islam say about homosexual behavior? Reference the Qurʾān in your answer.

5. Are people born with homosexual behaviors? What concept of *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* does this go against? How?

3.2 Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn about Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ and his community's lack of justice in trade.
- Contrast and compare the current economic systems to the Islamic economic system.
- Understand and explain the need for an Islamic economic system.
- Learn about Islamic business practices.

Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ was sent to his community to call the people to believe in the Unity of God. His community had strayed from the right path and were worshiping idols. In the Noble Qurʾān, Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ warned his people against being unjust.

> *And to [the people of] Madyan, [We sent] their brother Shuʿayb. He said: 'O my people, worship Allah! You have no other god besides Him. There has certainly come to you manifest proof from your Lord. Observe fully the measure and the balance, and do not cheat people of their goods, and do not cause corruption on the earth after its restoration. That is better for you, if you are faithful.'*[1]

His message was to teach his people about the true concept of *Tawḥīd*—the Oneness of Allah. The story of Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ is mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān in Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7) and Sūrah Hūd (11). He is quoted as saying:

> *'And O my people! Observe fully the measure and the balance with justice, and do not cheat the people of their goods,*[2] *and do not act wickedly on the earth, spreading corruption.'*[3]

According to a tradition reported from Imām ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn ﷺ Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ was the first person to introduce the use of scales and measures to his people.[4] For some time, they made good use of this invaluable tool, however, after a while, they began under weighing and defrauding one another. It was then that this very practice became the cause of Allah's curse and punishment upon them.

STOP AND REFLECT: Read over Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn, Chapter 83 in the Noble Qurʾān. Why do you think there is an entire chapter speaking about defrauders? Did any specific verse from this sūrah stand out to you? Why?

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verse 85.
2 That is, by employing short weights and measures.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Hūd (11), Verse 85.
4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 12, P. 382.

Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ was sent to two communities, as mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān. The first was called al-Aykah, and the second were the people of Madyan. Both of these groups had a common problem, and that was the habit of cheating in business. They did this in the following ways:

- They would rig their scales so that when they were measuring the products that they wanted to buy from other people, the scales would measure them as weighing less than what they really were. This way, they would pay less for what they bought.
- They under-valued products being sold to them by falsely criticizing them, so that they could buy them for a cheaper price.
- For the product that they wanted to sell, they would lie to their customers and hide the defects in them. They over-valued their own products, so that they could sell them for more.
- They lived in a fertile land, so the people around them from the desert had no choice but to trade with them. They used this as a way of taking advantage of the less fortunate ones.

Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ urged his people to be thankful of Allah's favors upon them, and to use these blessings to be fair to others. He urged them to be just in their business dealings, not cheat with the scales, and to only engage in legitimate and proper business transactions.

However, the people rejected his sincere teachings. They tried to trick him, accused him of being insane, and then threatened to exile him from their land.

Thereafter, Allah ﷻ punished them by sending upon them His wrath—leaving them as corpses in their own homes. He says in the Noble Qurʾān:

> *And when Our command came, We delivered Shuʿayb and the faithful people who believed with him, as a mercy from Us. And the Cry seized those who were the wrongdoers, and they lay lifeless, prostrate in their homes.* [5]

This was the fatal end of the disbelieving people of Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ—as was the end of others before and after them who rejected the Divine message and disbelieved in Allah's Messengers and Prophets ﷺ.

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Hūd (11), Verse 94.

A DEEPER LOOK INTO ECONOMICS

Due to not having faith in Allah ﷻ and the reckoning of the Hereafter, Prophet Shuʿayb's community had fallen into sin, were engaged in cheating, and were extremely unjust in their business dealings. So widespread was the corruption among the people of Prophet Shuʿayb ﷺ that it was considered to be the norm in their society. No one questioned their way of life as it brought them great material wealth and 'success' in their day-to-day business transactions.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some of the current norms in society that are explicitly forbidden *(ḥarām)*?

We must be careful not to fall into the same sins, especially those people who live in parts of the world that do not follow Islamic economics. Whenever a person engages in any kind of business, one must remember the following rules:

- Do not lie.
- Do not exaggerate about the qualities of what is being sold.
- Do not use oaths when selling or buying something (e.g. 'I swear by Allah that this car does not have a single problem with it, etc.').
- Only engage in legitimate and permissible *(ḥalāl)* business.
- Do not partake in anything forbidden or impermissible *(ḥarām).* If a person does, then even the food one purchases with that money obtained in a non permissible way—that would normally be considered as allowed and legitimate *(ḥalāl)*—will now have a very dire effect on the person and one's family. One of the many reasons why Muslims during the time of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ rose against him was because they had earned their sustenance in a forbidden *(ḥarām)* manner.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said: "Indeed, a person who partakes in trading, who is extremely honest and trustworthy in both words and deeds, will on the Day of Judgment, rise up with the Prophets of Allah, the righteous ones, and the martyrs."[6]

STOP AND REFLECT: What is the best reason to earn money? What is the purpose of money?

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Capitalism is the Economic System found in many societies today. Capitalism is a system where private owners control trade and industry for profit. For example, in a Capitalist Economy, anyone can start a business for profit without having to worry about whether there are hundreds of other people giving the same product or service. In theory, this is supposed to give an opportunity for the free market to push for innovation and economic growth.

For example, even if there are hundreds of shoe companies, if someone has an idea to make a better pair of shoes—perhaps one that is more waterproof than other kinds, or has a nicer pattern, etc.—then they can start their own business to make these. If it turns out that this is actually a better shoe than others, and there is a high demand for those shoes, then the business owner can set the price as high as they want, and people will probably still pay for it. In theory, this will benefit the business owner because they can earn the maximum profit for what they are making; and it will benefit the consumers because they have a variety of choices, and can be satisfied with the product they purchase.

In reality, Capitalism tends to favor the business owner, and consumers are left paying higher and higher prices over time. Whether people really need the products they purchase, and whether the products truly give them satisfaction are not taken into much consideration. Since the main goal of Capitalism is to sell products, it often leads to a culture of consumerism. This is a culture in which people are encouraged to continually buy new things, even if they are not really needed or necessary.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some of the problems with Capitalism?

6 Kāshānī, Muḥsin Fayḍ, *Al-Maḥajjah al-Bayḍāʾ,* Vol. 3, P. 140.

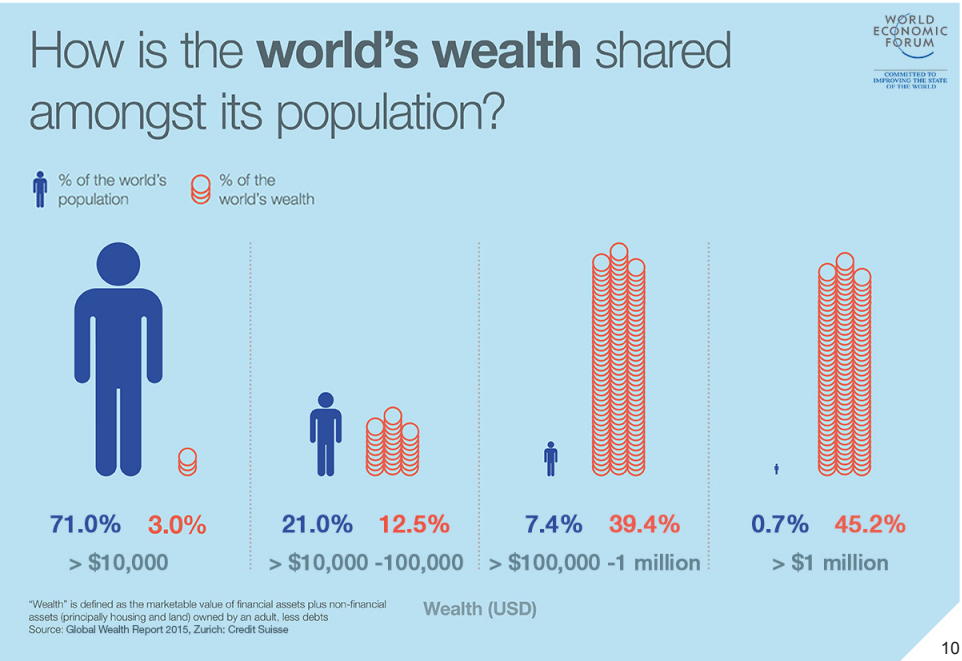
What happens when the reason for high demand for something is because it is a necessity?

Epinephrine—which is contained in epi-pens—is a life-saving drug, however, because it has been patented, they are too expensive for an average person to purchase if they do not have insurance.

Capitalist economies utilize systems that are helpful to gain profits, but hurt the average person. One example of this is usury (interest).

The below facts are a direct result of greed and excessive consumption that Capitalism is responsible for:

1. The richest 1% of the world's entire population own 43% of the world's wealth.[7]
2. 53.6% percent of the world's population own just 1.4% percent of the global wealth—this means that more than half of the world is forced to share just 1% of the available global wealth.[8]
3. Over 330 million children worldwide (1 child out of every 6) live in extreme poverty.[9]


How is the world's wealth shared amongst its population?
WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM
COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE STATE OF THE WORLD
% of the world's population
% of the world's wealth
71.0% 3.0%
> $10,000
21.0% 12.5%
> $10,000 -100,000
7.4% 39.4%
> $100,000 -1 million
0.7% 45.2%
> $1 million
"Wealth" is defined as the marketable value of financial assets plus non-financial assets (principally housing and land) owned by an adult, less debts
Source: Global Wealth Report 2015, Zurich: Credit Suisse
Wealth (USD)

10

7 https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/wealth-five-richest-men-doubles-2020-five-billion-people-made-poorer-decade-division

8 https://www.forbes.com/sites/qai/2021/11/30/countries-with-major-wealth-gaps-and-how-adopting-practices-like-investing-can-help/?sh=6c4c267d7a2b

9 https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1140687#:~:text=The%20report%20 shows%20that%20 globally, Saharan%20Africa%20 or%20 South%20Asia.

10 https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/10/who-are-the-1-the-answer-might-surprise-you/

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Working in groups, for each of the following statistics, fill in the following chart. Think about each statistic shared. How does it cause world problems and injustice? What is a potential solution that an Islamic System could bring?

STATISTICS FROM THIS LESSON	PROBLEM	POTENTIAL ISLAMIC SOLUTION
1. The richest 1% of the world's entire population own 43% of the world's wealth		
2. 53.6% percent of the world's population own just 1.4% percent of the global wealth. More than half of the world is forced to share just 1% of the available global wealth.		
3. 1 in 6 children worldwide live in extreme poverty.		

MARXISM

Marxism is an Economic System that was theorized by Karl Marx, a German sociologist, who criticized Capitalism, and theorized that the struggle between different classes of people would eventually lead to a Communist Revolution. In the Communist ideal, no one has the right to private property, and every person is entitled to labor as hours worked. His theory stated that the value of a produced economic good can be measured objectively by the average number of labor hours required to produce it.

SOCIALISM

The Socialist Economic System is a centralized economy in which the government organizes the allocation of resources according to the needs of the society. To ensure justice, the government in a socialist economy decides what, how, and for whom to produce.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE: THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Based upon your current knowledge of Marxism and Capitalism, why do these systems not work? Why would they be rejected in an Islamic System? Discuss your answers with a partner. Be sure to write down main points of discussion as you will be referring to them later.

THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC SYSTEM

As a comprehensive religion, Islam has a plan for all aspects of human life, including economic life. Islam has a particular Economic System which differs from other Economic Systems like the Socialist and Capitalist Systems that are currently in use. Islam is an entire way of life, and Allah's guidance extends into all areas of our lives. Islam provides detailed regulations for our economic life—which is balanced and fair. A close look at the economic teachings of Islam reveals a systematic plan for arranging economic affairs. If we review the teachings of Islam, we could find systematic answers to all of our questions about ways to manage the society and economy on a whole. There are many systematic economic teachings in Islam—which are for the betterment of people—such as the prohibition of usury, and the implementation of Islamic taxes such as *zakāh* and *khums*.

The Islamic Economic System is based on the following principles:

- **Justice and fairness.** A person is not allowed to cheat or be unfair to others just to make a profit. Exploitation is highly forbidden in Islam.
- **Real ownership belongs to Allah ﷻ.** Therefore, if a person is in need and we have the resources to help them out, then we must do so. Any wealth or possessions we have are trusts from Allah ﷻ and do not really belong to us.
- This system encourages **charity based on need** and sincerity.
- **Living moderately.** Although Islam does not ask us to forego all comforts and luxuries, we are encouraged and expected to live moderately, so that others in the world are not deprived. Rather than always buying and consuming for ourselves, we are encouraged to be content, live modestly, and give part of our excess wealth to help those who are in need of it more than us.

If all human beings were to implement these basic principles into our daily lives, then we would see all the financial problems of the world vanish, and equality of wealth would spread all around. Poverty would cease to exist!

Activity 3.2a: Venn Diagram

Based on your answers from the **Think, Pair, Share**, and the introduction of an Islamic Economic System, create a Venn Diagram between Capitalism and the Islamic System.

Activity 3.2b: Review Questions

1. In your own words, what was Prophet Shuʿayb's main message?

2. Fill in the following chart.

TYPE OF ECONOMIC SYSTEM	THEORY/ DEFINITION	SECTOR/ OWNERSHIP	OUTCOME
Capitalist Economy			
Marxist Economy			
Socialist Economy			
Islamic Economy			

3. List the main principles that a Muslim should adhere to in business transactions.

3.3 Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ and Lady Maryam

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Contrast the differences in the life of Lady Maryam from the Qurʾānic point of view and the Biblical point of view.
- Learn the virtues and importance of Lady Maryam.
- Logically demonstrate how Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ is not God.
- Be able to defend the Islamic position of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ compared to that in Christian religions.

The Noble Qurʾān states the true story of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ, and it is the only real source about the life of this great Messenger and Prophet of Allah.

The Bible and other historians do not give a true version of the story. We know that the Bible has been changed many times over the course of history, starting immediately after Prophet ʿIsā ﷺ left his people. Within the Bible, there is no real evidence pointing toward the truth of the story as there are no accounts from witnesses, letters to reference, or revelation from other Prophets ﷺ to indicate any truth. Islam is the only religion—other than Christianity—that even acknowledges Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ.

Muslims believe in Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ as an immaculate Messenger of God. We also believe in the great status of Lady Maryam, the mother of Prophet Īsā ﷺ; and the fact that this Prophet ﷺ is still alive; and that he will once again return to Earth to be along with Imām al-Mahdī ﷺ to establish justice and equality in the world.

THE TRUTH ABOUT LADY MARYAM

Perhaps due to the miraculous nature of the birth of Prophet Īsā ﷺ, there are many differences regarding the beliefs about Lady Maryam across different faiths.

- In the Jewish faith, she is not held in any regard, and is even accused of not being a chaste woman who had a child through adultery.[1]
- Some Christians—especially Catholics and Orthodox Christians—give Mary a very high status, giving her the title of "Queen of Heaven" and even pray to her.[2]
- Other Christians—mainly Protestants and Presbyterians—although they believe that she was the mother of Jesus, do not give much significance to her. In fact, they believe praying to her is an act of idolatry.[3]

The Noble Qurʾān mentions Maryam by name 25 times. In fact, she is the ONLY lady who is mentioned by name in the Qurʾān. She is mentioned as Prophet ʿĪsā's mother 16 times. This is to emphasize and leave no doubt that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ is not the son of God, nor is he God; and also to show that Lady Maryam is not the mother of God, rather she is the mother of a Prophet of God.

The Noble Qurʾān also mentions that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ and Lady Maryam worshiped One God, and ate and drank—which further proves that it impossible for them to be deities.

> *The Messiah, son of Maryam, is but a Messenger. Certainly, [other] Messengers have passed before him, and his mother was a truthful one. Both of them would eat food. Look how We clarify the signs for them (the people), yet look how they (the people) go astray!*[4]

1 www.revistaselectronicas.pucrs.br/download
2 https://www.religion-online.org/article/protestants-and-marian-devotion-what-about-mary/
3 https://www.religion-online.org/article/protestants-and-marian-devotion-what-about-mary/
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), Verse 75.

> *And [beware the Day] when Allah will say: 'O ʿĪsā, son of Maryam, did you say to people: 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?' ' He (ʿĪsā) will say: 'Glory be to You, I would not say what I do not have a right to say. If I had said it, You would have known it…'* [5]

As mentioned, Lady Maryam is often praised in the Noble Qurʾān and in the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. Some of her many virtues are as follows:

1. She is one of the four best women in history. The Prophet of Islam ﷺ said: "The four best women in Paradise are the following: Khadījah, the daughter of Khuwaylid; Fāṭimah, the daughter of Muḥammad; Maryam, the daughter of ʿImrān; and Āsiyah, the daughter of Muzāḥim, and the wife of Pharaoh." [6]
2. She is the only lady whose name is explicitly mentioned in the Qurʾān.
3. She is the first woman to be 'chosen' by Allah ﷻ.
4. She was spoken to by angels.
5. She has the right of intercession.

THE LIFE OF LADY MARYAM

Lady Maryam's father was Prophet ʿImrān ﷺ, and her mother's name was Ḥannah. Her mother had a sister whose name was Elizabeth, and she was married to Prophet Zakariyyā ﷺ.

Both of these sisters were tested with the hardship of not being able to have children. Ḥannah and Prophet ʿImrān ﷺ both prayed for a child sincerely. Her husband had a dream that a boy would be born into his family, and Ḥannah vowed that she would dedicate him to the service of Allah ﷻ. However, before the birth took place, ʿImrān ﷺ passed away.

When Ḥannah gave birth, she saw that it was a girl—not the boy she had assumed the baby would be from the dream. She was shocked, but since she was a faithful woman, she kept her vow. As soon as her daughter, whom she named Maryam, was old enough, Ḥannah gave her in the service of Allah ﷻ in a temple. The men of the temple drew lots to see who should look after Lady Maryam, and Prophet Zakariyyā ﷺ [Lady Maryam's maternal aunt's husband] was the one who was selected to look after her.

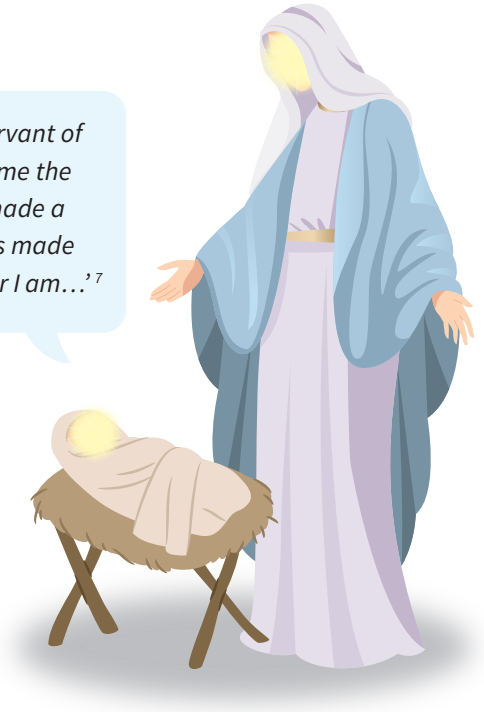
As Lady Maryam spent her life in the worship of Allah ﷻ, the Almighty would send her sustenance miraculously. She would receive the fruits of winter in the summer, and the fruits of summer in the winter.

CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF PROPHET ʿĪSĀ ﷺ

One night, she was visited by Angel Jibrāʾīl, but in the form of a man. She sought refuge with Allah ﷻ as she thought he had come to harm her, but then realized that the man was actually an angel. Jibrāʾīl gave glad tidings to Lady Maryam about having a son who would be a Prophet. However, Lady Maryam was not married, so this caused her a lot of worry. Jibrāʾīl said to her that Allah ﷻ has willed this, so it will happen. Lady Maryam went far away from her town to have her baby, but once she came back with her son, the accusations began against her. Allah ﷻ instructed her to observe a vow of silence, thus Lady Maryam responded by pointing to her baby, Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ. The people began to condemn her, but suddenly Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ began to speak as a newborn.

He (ʿĪsā ﷺ) said:

> *'Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and has made a Prophet; and He has made me blessed wherever I am…'* [7]



5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 116.
6 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khiṣāl,* Ḥadīth #22.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Maryam (19), Verses 30-31.

Activity 3.3a: Quick Write

In your own words, describe the life of Lady Maryam, and be sure to include the important events.

BIRTH OF PROPHET ʿĪSĀ 🕊 IN SUMMERTIME

The Bible contradicts itself about when Prophet ʿĪsā 🕊 was born. However, there are indications that his birth occurred in the summer. So why is Christmas celebrated during the wintertime in the Northern Hemisphere? The Christmas that is celebrated today is not the real birth date of Prophet ʿĪsā 🕊. The current date for 'Christmas' was chosen because it was the longest winter night in the Northern Hemisphere. The pagans of the time who were becoming Christians wanted their celebrations to last as long as possible and to be a substitute for the pagan festival they used to celebrate on that day and night. According to a tradition from Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq 🕊, Prophet ʿĪsā 🕊 was actually born in a long summer night in the month of June.[8]

8 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl,* Vol. 1, P. 375.

Activity 3.3b: Debate

How can you prove that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ is not the son of God? Create the beginning of a logical debate or dialogue in 7-10 lines.

WAS PROPHET ʿĪSĀ ﷺ GIVEN A BOOK THAT HE TAUGHT?

The Noble Qurʾān confirms that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ had a book revealed to him which was called the **Injīl**.

It seems from the present Bible that Jesus had a Scripture called 'the Gospel.'[9] However, Christians do not recognize any written Gospel from Jesus. They claim that he did not consign to writing his own teachings, and directed his followers not to write, but to preach verbally to other people. In justification of their belief, they offer a literal interpretation for the word "Gospel" used in Biblical verses which is as follows:

Now, after John [the Baptist] was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, saying: 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.'[10]

They assert that the term Gospel has a literal meaning, i.e. glad tidings.

This claim is an attempt to conceal a historical fact about the original Gospel. Unfortunately, the actual Gospel of Jesus was lost or destroyed by the Jews. It has also been expressed by a number of historians that divisions between the early sects of Christianity encouraged the destruction of writings which they did not approve of.

9 Bible, Matthew 4:23.
10 Bible, Mark 1:14-15.

WHO WROTE THE GOSPELS?

The current Bible consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament contains the 'Four Gospels' and another section called the 'Letters of Paul.' Sometime after the departure of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ, many people began to write 'gospels.' Between 50 to 100 gospels were written. In 397 AD, at the Council of Carthage, the people of the time chose four of them to be in the current New Testament: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[11]

All Christian scholars agree that the writers of these Gospels were not the disciples of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ.[12] The Bible was written by four people who did not even have direct access to Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ.

They were not his companions, nor successors, nor were they messengers. They did not hear these words directly from Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ, thus they could not write them down exactly. Mark was one of the students of St. Peter, who was one of the disciples of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ.

The Gospels also differ in many instances in regard to the narration of the genealogy and the birth of Jesus to his so-called crucifixion.[13]

It is evident from the chronology of events that the current Bible which the Christians have today is not the book of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ. It is not the *Injīl* mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān. Although the original source of some of the material may be the original Holy Book, we cannot rely on these Gospels because they are not the Words of God or the Words of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ. Rather, they were written by others sometime later on.

STOP AND REFLECT: Compare the circumstances of the writing of the Bible to that of the Qurʾān.

All this sheds light on the miraculous nature of the Noble Qurʾān. It demonstrates the blessings that humanity has been given in that they have access to a true and authentic Book which is the Word of Allah ﷻ revealed directly to His Messenger ﷺ, compiled during his lifetime, in its original language, and being preserved until today—more than 1400 years after it was revealed.

We are truly lucky to have direct access to the Words of Allah ﷻ as revealed onto the heart of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and we should be abundantly grateful for this miraculous blessing, and do our best to gain guidance from this sacred Book.

11 https://rsc.byu.edu/new-testament-history-culture-society/canonization-new-testament
12 https://www.bartehrman.com/who-wrote-the-gospels/
13 https://ehrmanblog.org/a-major-controversy-in-new-testament-textual-criticism/

THE MYTH OF CRUCIFIXION

Christians believe that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ was crucified and died on the cross. Crucifixion was a form of torture, done by hanging someone on the cross. Some of them also believe—depending on the sect—that he was then resurrected and raised to heaven by Allah ﷻ.

According to the Noble Qurʾān however, Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ was never crucified; he was raised up to heaven by Allah ﷻ without being caught by his enemies. The Noble Qurʾān emphasizes the fact that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ was not crucified, it says:

> *And (because of) their saying: 'Indeed, we killed the Messiah, ʿĪsā, son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah,' but they killed him not, nor did they crucify him, but it appeared so to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For, surely they killed him not. But Allah raised him to Himself. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.*[14]

The authors of the Gospels—who claim that crucifixion happened—were not even present at that time. They could not have heard it from the disciples of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ either because according to the Bible, the disciples ran away and were not present at the time of that crucifixion.[15]

Christians believe that all human beings are sinful, and Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ having died on the cross is a means of salvation for all of them from their sins if they believe in Christianity.[16] This is why in the Noble Qurʾān—especially in Sūrah an-Nisāʾ—Allah ﷻ emphasizes so many times that the crucifixion did not happen, and Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ did not die.[17]

Furthermore, it is false to claim that one person suffering and dying would lead to the sins of other people being forgiven.[18] It is also an unjust assumption that all people are born sinful and are prone to being punished. This is because Allah ﷻ is All-Just and All-Fair. He would not punish a person or cause one to be born sinful when that person has not done anything wrong. He would also not cause one individual to suffer in order to forgive the sins of other people, or forgive a person because of the suffering of another. All of this would go against the Justice of Allah ﷻ, and logic necessitates that Allah ﷻ is All-Just.

According to the Noble Qurʾān, Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ was never crucified

STOP AND REFLECT: What is the difference between believing that someone dying can lead to the sins of other people being forgiven, and the concept of *shafāʿah* (intercession) of the Prophets ﷺ and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ? Consider what Āyatul Kursī says about intercession in your answer.

14 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verses 157-158.
15 Bible, Mark 14:50 (King James Version): "And they all forsook him, and fled."
16 Bible, Romans 3:23-24 (New International Version): "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."
17 Deedat, Ahmed, CRUCIFIXION OR CRUCI-FICTION. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_Crucifixion_Or_Cruci-fiction.pdf
18 Bible, Ezekiel 18:20-22 (King James Version):
20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
21: "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."
22: "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live."

DID PROPHET ʿĪSĀ ﷺ EVER CLAIM TO BE GOD?

The Noble Qurʾān states that on the Day of Judgment, Allah ﷻ will ask Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ if he told the people to worship him or his mother? The purpose of this rhetorical question is for the Christians to hear it directly from Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ that he never had such a blasphemous claim.

> *And when Allah will say: 'O ʿĪsā, son of Mariam! Did you say to the people: 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?' He will say: 'Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right to say, and if I had said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner self though I do not know what is in Yourself. Indeed, it is only You who is the All-Knower of the unseen.'* [19]

Nowhere—not even in the present Gospels—does it indicate that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ ever explicitly claimed to be God. The Encyclopedia Britannica[20] states: "Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Old Testament: Hear, O Israel: The Lord, our God, is One Lord." [21]

The worship of One God was always focal in Prophet ʿĪsā's life. For instance, when his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, he taught them how to pray to God, the Father, not to himself. [22]

One day, Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him: "Lord, teach us how to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them: "When you (want to) pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your Name, Your Kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'" [23]

Notice that the words "Father…give us" indicate that he included himself among the creations of God, acknowledging a high authority—God—over all of them. Similarly, according to John, Jesus said to Mary: "I am going to ascend to my father and your father, to my God and your God." [24]

According to Mark, Jesus did not even allow himself to be called 'good' let alone 'God.' Mark narrates that as Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him: "O good teacher. What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." [25]

We conclude from these discussions that all the rational and textual evidences indicate that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ is not God, nor the son of God. [26]

19 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Māʾidah (5), Verse 116.

20 https://www.britannica.com/topic/Trinity-Christianity

21 Bible, Mark 12:28-29 (New International Version)
The Greatest Commandment:
28: "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him: 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?'"
29: "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.'"

22 Bible, Matthew 26:36-46 (New International Version)
Gethsemane:
36: "Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them: 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.'"
37: "He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled."
38: "Then he said to them: 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'"
39: "Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed: 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'"
40: "Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter."
41: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
42: "He went away a second time and prayed: 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your Will be done.'"
43: "When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy."
44: "So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing."
45: "Then he returned to the disciples and said to them: 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour hath come.'"

23 Bible, Luke 11:1-2.

24 Bible, John 20:17.

25 Bible, Mark 10:17-18.

26 Bible, John 17:3 (New International Version):
"Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

Activity 3.3c: Review Questions

1. Who are the four best women in history?

2. What is the Qurʾānic story of Prophet ʿĪsā's crucifixion. How does this contrast with the Biblical story?

3. In your own words, prove that Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ never claimed to be God. Think logically. Refer to the lesson for guidance.

4. Is the Bible that is around today, the same book as the one during the time of Prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ? Why or why not? Defend your answer with proof from this lesson.

Activity 3.3d: Reflection

Consider the following references from the Bible, and explain their connection to the different points mentioned in this lesson.

1. "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him: 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?' 'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.'"" [27]
2. "And they all forsook him, and fled." [28]
3. "Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." [29]
4. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." [30]

27 Bible, Mark 12:28-29.
28 Bible, Mark 14:50.
29 Bible, John 17:3.
30 Bible, Romans 3:23-24.

CHAPTER 4

Contemporary Muslims

4.1 Scholars of our Time

4.2 Malcolm X and Muslims in America

4.1 Scholars of our Time

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Learn about the importance of the Islamic Seminary *(Ḥawzah).*
- Learn about some different scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* of our time and their life stories.
- Take advice from some of our great scholars.
- Demonstrate the role of knowledge and seeking knowledge in our lives.

Shrine of Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūma in Qum, Iran

LADY FĀṬIMAH MAʿṢŪMAH—THE HEART OF QUM

The word *Ḥawzah* in Arabic literally means a 'neighborhood or territory.' In the last hundred years, *"Ḥawzah al-ʿIlmiyyah"* or *"Ḥawzah"* for short, is a term that has been used for a 'place of learning and teaching knowledge,' and in particular, an Islamic Seminary—a place where students learn to become scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* of Islam.

Although historically, the city of Najaf in Iraq has the oldest *Ḥawzah al-ʿIlmiyyah* that has produced some of history's greatest scholars, the city of Qum is now the home of the largest *Ḥawzah* today. Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūmah, the sister of Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ, is buried in Qum, Iran.

During her time, people often had to travel far distances to gain knowledge. People would come to the house of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ﷺ to ask him questions, and when he was out of the house, they would ask Lady Fāṭimah their queries, and she would write down their answers for them. On their way back, they would cross paths with Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ, and he would check the answers, and noticing that they were all correct and the way he would have responded to them, he would say "may I be sacrificed for her."[1] Although the 7th Imām ﷺ could have answered them himself, he may have been doing this to show the knowledge and status of Lady Maʿṣūmah.

She was a lady of great knowledge, and it is said that her light strengthens the lives of those studying in her city up until today. Scholars often go to her shrine and pray for guidance on their path of knowledge, and it is said that doing her *ziyārah* is like doing the *ziyārah* of Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ whose grave is hidden from us. Both men and women can be scholars and seekers of high levels of knowledge, as seen in the life of Lady Maʿṣūmah.

In this lesson, we will take a brief look at the lives of four great scholars who were associated with the Ḥawzah of Qum, namely: Āyatullāh Khomeini, Āyatullāh Bahjat, Āyatullāh Muṭahharī, and Āyatullāh Khamenei.

1 This was a phrase that people would often use in those times to show respect and reverence for someone.

ĀYATULLĀH KHOMEINI

Āyatullāh Sayyid Rūḥullāh Mūsawi Khomeini was born in 1900 in a town called Khomein, a city near Tehran, Iran. His parents were Āyatullāh Sayyid Muṣṭafā Mūsawi and Ḥajieh Āghā Khānum (also called Ḥajar). His father was killed when Āyatullāh Khomeini was only five months old. His mother and aunt raised him, but both of them died in the same year when Āyatullāh Khomeini was only fifteen years old. Āyatullāh Khomeini started his studies in the *Ḥawzah* of Arāk. In 1921, his teacher, Āyatullāh Shaykh ʿAbdul Karīm Ḥāʾirī Yazdī decided to move to Qum, and Āyatullāh Khomeini decided to follow him.

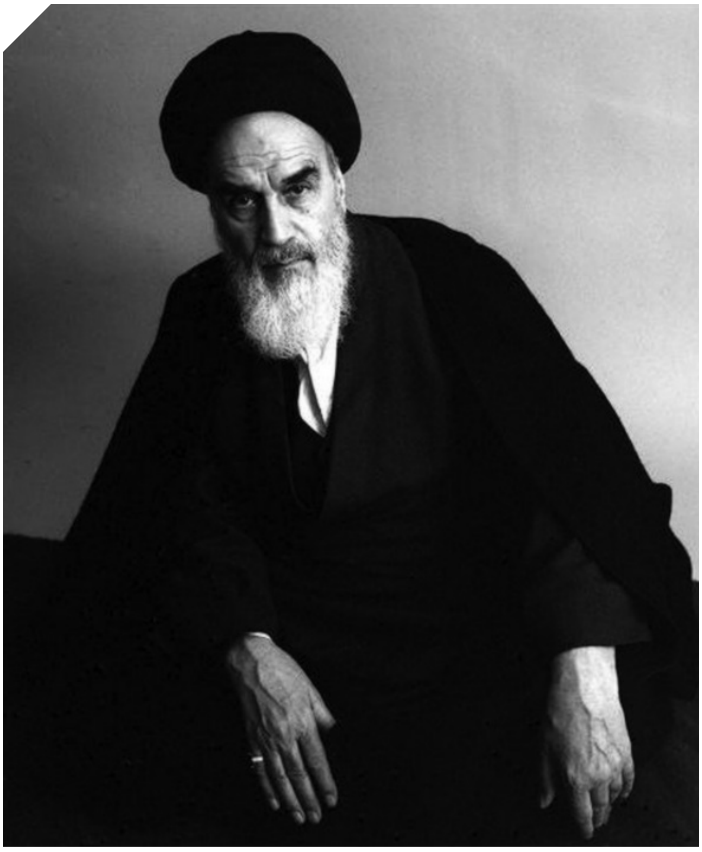
He developed a love for Qum and the spiritual blessings that this city brought him. In 1980, when addressing a group of visitors from Qum, he declared: "Wherever I may be, I am a citizen of Qum, and take pride in this fact. My heart will always be with Qum and its people." [2]

From the early years of studying in Qum, Āyatullāh demonstrated that he was going to be a great scholar in Jurisprudence *(Fiqh)*. He also showed great interest in subjects such as Philosophy and Mysticism *(ʿIrfān)*, which usually were absent from the curriculum at that time.

Āyatullāh Khomeini was the leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran which took place in 1979 that led to the successful overthrow of the Pahlavi Regime.

Despite the greatness of his political achievements, Āyatullāh Khomeini's personality was essentially that of a gnostic who dedicated himself to knowledge, and devoted his entire life to Allah ﷻ.

His comprehensive vision of Islam that he both articulated and exemplified is his most significant legacy.



THINK, PAIR, SHARE

What is a gnostic? Discuss with a partner what you think this means and how this is attributed to being one of Āyatullāh Khomeini's greatest characteristics. Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

Among some of his great works is a book titled *Sharḥ Chehel Ḥadīth* in Persian, which in English is translated as: *A Commentary of Forty Traditions (Ḥadīth).* In this outstanding book, Āyatullāh Khomeini writes about and gives advice based on 40 chosen *ḥadīth*.

This is in line with the tradition of the Prophet ﷺ, who said:

مَنْ حَفِظَ عَلَى أُمَّتِي أَرْبَعِينَ حَدِيثاً يَنْتَفِعُونَ بِهَا بَعَثَهُ اللّٰهُ يَوْمَ القِيَامَةِ فَقِيهاً عَالِماً ○

A person who memorizes (preserves and protects) 40 traditions (ḥadīth), so that my nation may benefit from them, Allah will resurrect them on the Day of Judgment as a (great) jurist and scholar. [3]

2 *Ṣaḥīfah-e Nūr,* Vol. 12, P. 51.
3 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, Vol. 17, P. 287.

Activity 4.1a: Analysis of Traditions

Using the following link, choose a tradition *(ḥadīth)* from the book, *A Commentary of Forty Ḥadīth*. **https://www.al-islam.org/forty-hadith-exposition-second-revised-edition-sayyid-ruhullah-musawi-khomeini**

Once you have read the *ḥadīth* and commentary provided for it, create a short presentation which includes the following information:

1. Name and chain of narrators of the *ḥadīth.*

2. Summary of the *ḥadīth* and short commentary of it.

A COMMENTARY ON FORTY ḤADĪTH

https://www.al-islam.org/forty-hadith-exposition-second-revised-edition-sayyid-ruhullah-musawi-khomeini

3. One point that you found very interesting that is mentioned in the commentary and why.

ĀYATULLĀH BAHJAT

Āyatullāh Muḥammad Taqī Bahjat was born in 1916 in a religious family in Fūman, in the Gīlan province of Iran. When he was only 16 months old, he lost his mother, thus was then brought up by his father. After his studies in Fūman, he traveled to Iraq to the Islamic Seminaries there, staying in Karbalāʾ for the first four years. In 1934, he migrated to Najaf to finish his intermediate studies of Islamic disciplines with prominent scholars such as Āyatullāh Shaykh Murtaḍā Tāliqānī. After this, he started his advanced studies in Jurisprudence and Principles of Jurisprudence, as well as Ethics and Mysticism with prominent scholars and mystics in Najaf.

Āyatullāh Bahjat's style of teaching was quite different from that of his contemporary scholars. According to ʿAlī Akbar Masʿūdī Khomeini, unlike most scholars who mention other scholars and then defend or criticize them, Āyatullāh Bahjat never mentioned other scholar's names. He would simply describe their views, and the student would have to already know the different views of the scholars from the literature in order to understand who he was referring to.

Āyatullāh Bahjat started to write when he was quite young. He helped Shaykh ʿAbbās Qummī in the writing of his book, *Safīnat al-Biḥār.* One of his most famous teachings was to have students implement what they already knew. He has been known to have said: "People who ask for some spiritual advice should be asked whether they have practiced the spiritual advice they have heard so far. Do you know that if a person acts upon what they already know, then Allah will reveal to them what they do not know? Should the call to the right path be through the tongue? Are we not told to take the right path with our actions?"

STOP AND REFLECT: Do you think that the call to the right path should be through the tongue only?

Photo: Miladshakouri81 (commons.wikimedia.org)

Activity 4.1b: Video Summary

Watch the following video, then write a summary of the main point in the video about Āyatullāh Bahjat. **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDphxWmtzDs**

TEARS AND DUAS | AYATOLLAH BAHJAT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDphxWmtzDs

ĀYATULLĀH MUṬAHHARĪ

One of the most prominent students of ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī was Āyatullāh Murtaḍā Muṭahharī. Āyatullāh Muṭahharī had a very close relationship with ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī. When a scholar asked him: "Why do you respect ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī so much, and say 'may I be sacrificed for him'?" He replied: "I have seen many philosophers and mystics. My unique respect for ʿAllāmah is not related to his being a philosopher; rather, my reverence stems from the fact that he is an enamored lover of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.

[For example] ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī used to break his fast in the month of Ramaḍān by kissing the *ḍarīḥ*[4] of Lady Maʿṣūmah. He would walk to the holy shrine, kiss the *ḍarīḥ*, and then return to his home to eat. It is this characteristic he has that captivated me to such a degree."

Āyatullāh Muṭahharī and ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī together studied Western Philosophy and Materialism, after which they began to write about these ideas so that people could understand the Islamic perspective. He spent much of his efforts on trying to provide knowledge on subjects that were normally not written about, but very much needed in society. In his book, *Divine Justice*, Āyatullāh Muṭahharī writes:

> *Islam has become an unknown religion. Its tenets have steadily been undermined in the eyes of people. The main reason for this fallout of a group of people has been the incorrect teachings that they have been given in the name of Islam. Presently, and more than anything else, this sacred tradition is being damaged by those who would make claims of being its helpers. The overt and covert western "imperialist" onslaught on the one hand, and the faults and shortcomings of the would-be helpers of Islam in our age on the other, have led to Islamic thought—in all its fields and branches—coming under attack. Hence, I feel that I must perform my humble duty in this regard, to the extent of my capacity, [and defend Islam from these attacks].*
>
> *Published works on religion, just as I have pointed out in some of my other works, are not systematic. Putting aside those works which are fundamentally damaging and disgraceful, even useful works are not thought out and have not been produced after taking into account the needs at hand. It seems that every author writes and publishes whatever they themselves deem useful. Hence, there are many useful and necessary subjects that do not even have a single book on them, while there are some subjects that have countless books written on them and more are being written all the time.*

4 This is the cube shaped sepulcher that surrounds the area where the graves of certain revered individuals have been laid to rest.

Activity 4.1c: Summarizing Questions

Read the above passage again by Āyatullāh Muṭahharī and answer the following questions:

1. What does Āyatullāh Muṭahharī mean when he says that "Islam has become an unknown religion"?

2. What is the main reason for the fallout of religion?

3. Why does he refer to published books as not being thought out? What is he referring to? What subjects of Islam do you wish there was more information on in English?

4. What are some small things that we can do to help spread Islam properly?

We should take this as an example for ourselves and try to learn Islam in its true essence. One of the ways that we can learn Islam properly is by attending one of the recognized *Ḥawzahs*. If we truly want to seek guidance and knowledge, then we must follow the means and path that have been set out for us. Another means—if going to a traditional *Ḥawzah* is not viable for us—is to seek knowledge through respectable scholars in our own communities, and not falling to the misconception of 'Islam of America' which Āyatullāh Khomeni spoke about. Although we may not be able to become scholars or authors of Islamic knowledge, we can at least practice what we do know with the correct intentions.

Activity 4.1d: Video Summary

Watch the following video and write a short summary about it. Be sure to include what particular fact you found the most interesting. Be prepared to share your thoughts and opinions with your class. Link: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pj_OFvnPG20**

THE SURAH OF IMAM HUSAYN ﷺ | SHAHEED MURTADHA MUTAHHAR

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pj_OFvnPG20

ĀYATULLĀH KHAMENEI

Photo Credit: Khamenei.ir

Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī Khamenei was born April 19, 1939 to a religious family in Mashhad, Iran. His father, Sayyid Jawād Khamenei, was among the *mujtahidīn*[5] and scholars of his time.

Āyatullāh Khamenei began his *Ḥawzah* studies while he was in his last years of primary school. In 1964, at the age of 25, he attended advanced lessons (the highest-level courses of the *Ḥawzah*) under Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Hādī Mīlānī. In 1966, he took a short trip to Najaf with his family, and while there, participated in the lessons of famous teachers; however, due to his father's wish, he returned to Mashhad and attended one more year in the class of Āyatullāh Mīlānī, then in 1967, he went to the *Ḥawzah* in Qum.

Since the time he was in Mashhad, he taught Jurisprudence *(Fiqh)* and Essentials *(Uṣūl)* at high levels, and held public sessions on the Commentary *(Tafsīr)* of the Noble Qurʾān. In 1968, he began teaching a special course on *Tafsīr* of the Noble Qurʾān for higher academic students of the religion which continued until 1977 before he was exiled to Īrānshahr. His *Tafsīr* sessions continued for some years during his presidency and also after that. He began teaching his higher advanced level classes *(dars al-khārij)* in 1990 and has continued these classes until now.

Āyatullāh Khamenei is the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and is involved with political and Islamic work. Many of his books have been translated into various languages and can be found on his website which is: **www.leader.ir**

5 Plural of *mujtahid*.

Activity 4.1e: Review Questions

1. Why is Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūmah an important personality in Qum?

2. Give a brief description about the life and studies of Āyatullāh Khomenei.

3. Why did Āyatullāh Muṭahharī spend the majority of his work on writing about topics that were generally not already written about?

4. Āyatullāh Bahjat said: “People who ask for some spiritual advice should be asked whether they have practiced the spiritual advice they have heard so far. Do you know that if a person acts upon what they already know, then Allah will reveal to them what they do not know? Should the call to the right path be through the tongue? Are we not told to take the right path with our actions?”

5. What does this mean? What point do you think he is trying to make?

4.2 Malcolm X and Muslims in America

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

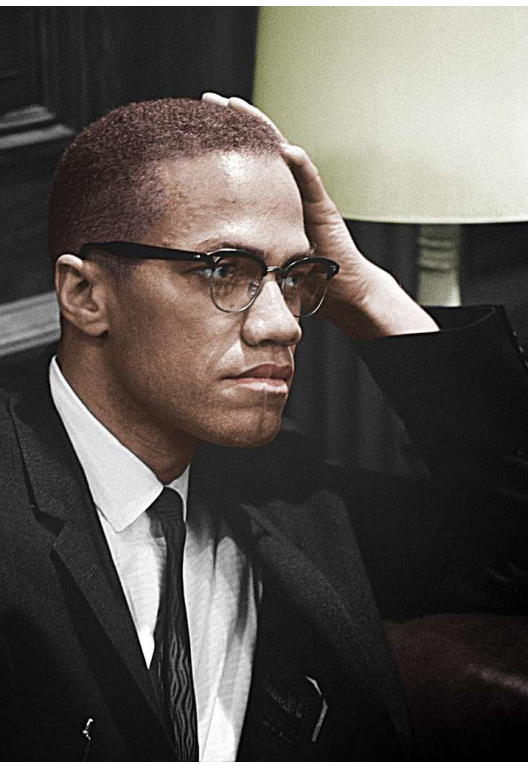
- Learn the life and basic biography of Martyr Malcolm X.
- Understand the role of Islam in the face of racism.
- Analyze the narrations *(aḥādīth)* and verses *(āyāt)* of the Qur'ān that deal with racism.
- Explain what we can do in our own communities to combat racism.

At a conference in Iran on February 21, 2017, in support of the Palestinians, Āyatullāh Khamenei commemorated the martyrdom *(shahādah)* of Malcolm X, mentioning at the beginning of his speech that it was the death anniversary of this great martyr *(shahīd)*. This commemoration indicates how globally significant Malcolm X is, and how relevant Malcolm X and his life should be—about 60 years later—to societies around the world even today.

Stop and Reflect: Why is it important to discuss the recent history of Muslims in the West?

THE LIFE OF MALCOLM X

The 1950s and 1960s started to change the American perception of Islam as the Civil Rights Movement was underway. El-Ḥajj Malik el-Shabazz, who is much better known by the name, Malcolm X, was a prominent African-American Muslim leader. He helped many African Americans, and his legacy for the Muslims is an example of someone who strived for closeness to Allah ﷻ through struggling against oppression. He went through many changes in his understanding of Islam by keeping an open mind as he learned more, and acted upon his new knowledge.



Malcolm X's father was a Baptist Minister and was known to be a strong leader. Malcolm X had stated that his father was motivated to act in favor of justice, defying the white supremacists who attempted to take his life multiple times. In his autobiography, Malcolm X fondly remembers his father's stance against injustice, and how he learned (many lessons) from this at a young age. However, due to their prominence and activism, the family became victims of racially motivated violence, and their house in Michigan was burnt down.

A few years later, his father was found dead under suspicious circumstances. Devastated by the death of her husband and having to raise seven children alone during the Great Depression, Malcolm's mother had a nervous breakdown and was forcibly hospitalized for 20 years. Malcolm's family was split up all over America. He and his brothers were sent into foster care. It was during this period that Malcolm turned away from religion and resorted to a life of crime. At a very young age, Malcolm found himself in jail for theft, serving a ten-year sentence.

Malcolm X first converted to Islam while he was in prison—after exchanging letters with his brother, Reginald, who had become Muslim. He joined the Nation of Islam, which was a political organization that changed the teachings of Islam to fit its own goals.

STOP AND REFLECT: How can someone go from being a criminal to a spiritual person of religion?

The Nation of Islam (NOI)

Once Malcolm was released from prison in 1952, he went to meet the leader of the Nation of Islam, Elijjah Muhammad, and quickly grew to become an influential speaker within the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X brought many Black Americans toward the NOI. He was also instrumental in opening many NOI mosques in America.

One night, in 1957 in the city of New York, a fellow Muslim black man was beaten in the street by a policeman. During this time, the city had seen and grown accustomed to police brutality. Three other black men saw the attack and went to the man's aid. The policeman turned to one of the men named Hinton Johnson, who tried to help, and beat him to the point that he got a fractured skull. All of the black men were arrested and brought to the police station. Upon hearing that a fellow Muslim was dying in the police station, Malcolm X rallied thousands of Muslims, and they formed a mass protest at the police station to demand medical treatment for Hinton Johnson.

By the time Johnson's injuries were treated and he was returned back to the police station, 4,000 people had gathered there. Malcolm X went outside and with the wave of his hand signaled the crowd to disperse. The Muslims left silently, and one police officer was reported to have said: "No one man should have that much power." [1]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

How does this event demonstrate Malcolm X's leadership, and community organization capabilities?

Leaving the Nation and Converting to Sunnī Islam

Over time, Malcolm X realized that the NOI organization was corrupt and left it. His relationship with the Nation of Islam and his one time mentor, Elijah Muhammad, began to sour. In 1964, Malcolm X publicly denounced the Nation of Islam. He began to truly become a better Muslim, and during April of that same year, he went for *Ḥajj* where he really understood the Unity of Islam.

During *Ḥajj*, skin color and ethnicity no longer mattered. He noticed the peacefulness of all of the people performing the pilgrimage—regardless of who they were, where they came from, how rich or poor they were, or their background. This was in direct contrast to the teachings of the Nation of Islam who taught that the "white man" is the devil. It was in Mecca that his faith was affirmed, and he found Islam to be the **only solution** for the racial prejudice and injustice that had marked his life from the very beginning.

1 Marable, Manning (2011), *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. New York: Viking.

Ḥajj—a Life Changing Experience

In his autobiography, Malcolm X described how his trip to *Ḥajj* changed him forever. He saw how Muslims acted with one another during *Ḥajj*. The racism that was so prevalent in America did not exist at all with the people he was there with in Mecca. In a letter to his wife, Betty, he explained about his experiences, and how this internal change would not have been possible without keeping an open mind about what he was witnessing:

> "We were truly all the same—because their belief in One God had removed the 'white' from their minds, the 'white' from their behavior, and the 'white' from their attitude. I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man, and cease to measure, hinder, and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in color."

Preaching True Islam

After publicly denouncing the Nation of Islam and accepting mainstream Islam, Malcolm X began openly fighting for justice in America for all people. He used the teachings of Islam to further brotherhood amongst Muslims. With his known stance on the Civil Rights Movement, he worked toward creating a society based on justice. He worked to overturn the political system at that time, through his reliance on Allah ﷻ. As Malcolm X grew in his understanding of religion, his faith and love for Allah ﷻ also grew. Very quickly, it can be seen that he recognized that his true self was an immaterial soul, and he embraced the idea of death. Throughout his life, this great man demonstrated that true revolution starts within yourself.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is the first step to enacting societal change?

The profound impact of *Ḥajj*, along with everyone wrapped in their white *iḥrām*[2] displaying a spirit of unity led to his change in teachings of race.

Malcolm X said himself: "America needs to understand Islam because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem."

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

O humankind! Indeed, We have created you from male and female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (God-conscious) among you. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.[3]

All of humankind began with Prophet Ādam ﷺ and Lady Ḥawwāʾ, thus we all spring from the same root. The only distinction within Islam is the consciousness of Allah ﷻ and the piety of people. All outward and material privileges are invalidated, and the true standard is not in our skin color or race, but in our spirituality and closeness to Allah ﷻ. This is a spiritual and inward quality whose permanence in the heart and soul precedes any other quality.

STOP AND REFLECT: If you saw racism within your community, what would you do? Should it be addressed in a certain way? What did the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ teach us about racism?

Sadly, among our communities today, we still see racism in various forms. In Islam, racism is unacceptable in any form. Islam teaches us that we are all born equal with dignity and nobility regardless of race. We need to continually be conscious and aware of our thoughts and actions. We need to be aware and uphold our duties as Muslims to stop any form of racism whenever we see it occuring within our communities.

The Martyrdom of Malcolm X

After his pilgrimage to Mecca, people were unhappy that Malcolm X was speaking about the truth of Islam, talking about not being racist, not hating 'the whites,' and because he had such a strong following. Various private organizations—with government support—began planning to kill him for his strong views and charismatic leadership.

A year prior to his martyrdom, Malcolm X and his family received various threatening phone calls from members of the Nation of Islam. Many prominent members had been recorded saying that Malcolm was "a dead man" or "he deserves to die."

2 This is entering a state during the pilgrimage in which certain things become forbidden upon a person.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 13.

His house was set on fire, and Malcolm knew that the NOI was trying to kill him.

Malcolm X was martyred on February 21st, 1965, when he was assassinated while giving a speech. He reached this high status of becoming a martyr *(shahīd)* by accepting true Islam as he learned more, and by acting upon the knowledge that he had about this religion.

Shahīd Malcolm X stands among Muslims as a frontier in the battle against racism. He fought for justice by using Islam as a standard. His story is very much relevant today as the struggle for justice is still ongoing.

Even though there is no evidence available that Malcolm X formally accepted *Shīʿah* Islam, it is likely that he was exposed to some of its teachings.[4] The way he was martyred in the path of the truth reminds us about the ultimate martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ.

Malcolm Shabazz, a grandson of Malcolm X, was a practicing *Shīʿah* Muslim and a powerful activist for justice who was taking the path of his grandfather. Unfortunately, he too was killed in 2013 under suspicious circumstances.

LIVING AS MUSLIMS TODAY

Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān:

> "And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah." [5]

Malcolm X's actions are a lesson for us about the truth of our religion. He reached the great station of martyrdom *(shahādah)* through his love for Allah ﷻ, which he demonstrated by helping himself and his community, and fighting racism and oppression. Despite coming from a life of sin and much hardship, he was not content to live in pursuit of material happiness, and strived to reach a greater Truth.

Muslims who live in America or elsewhere should be strong in their understanding of Islam and Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*. Islam is a beautiful, and most perfect way of life, and it teaches us to be a unified nation.

We should be Muslim before we are American or any other nationality, as the Prophet ﷺ showed us by example. We have to be strong in our beliefs through our love for Allah ﷻ—even when it is difficult. Although in America and other non-Muslim countries, there are people who criticize and do not understand Islam, this was always the case—even during the time of our Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ. This is a test for us, just as it was a test for them. But we need to do our best to persevere and remain strong in our faith.

4 Morrow, John Andrew, *Malcolm X and the Twelve Imams of the So-Called "Extremist" Shiites*. https://bliis.org/research/malcolm-x-twelve-imams-extremist-shiites/

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 165.

Activity 4.2a: Review Questions

1. How did Malcolm X demonstrate true leadership in the Hinton Johnston incident?

2. Define racism in your own words. How is Islam against this?

3. In your own words, briefly describe the life of Malcolm X. Why is he such an important figure—not only for Muslims—but for African Americans especially?

4. What did Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ say in his Farewell *Ḥajj* sermon about racism and the Muslim nation? How does this correlate to the biography of Malcolm X?

5. How do you think we can take proactive steps in reducing racism within our own communities?

AKHLĀQ
(ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE)

CHAPTER 1

Mind, Body and Soul

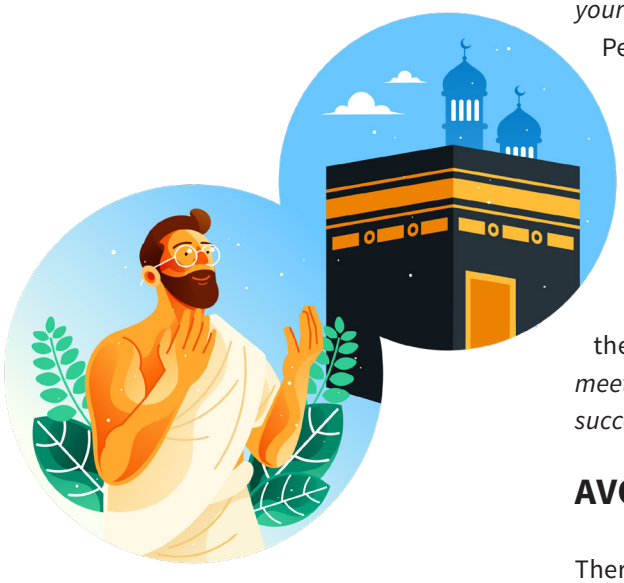
1.1 Practically Achieving our Purpose
1.2 Balance in Time Management
1.3 Silence, Solitude, and Contemplation
1.4 Depression and Anxiety: Part 1
1.5 Depression and Anxiety: Part 2

1.1 Practically Achieving our Purpose

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Contrast the difference between heedlessness *(ghaflah)* and remembrance *(dhikr)*.
- Identify the different types of 'remembrance of Allah' *(dhikrullāh)*.
- Develop strategies for incorporating the remembrance of Allah *(dhikrullāh)* in our own lives.



A LIFE OF REMEMBRANCE

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you do when you miss or remember a person you care about?

When we remember someone we are close to, we try to let them know. For example, if we miss our friends or remember them, we might call to talk to them, send them a text message, or try to spend some time with them.

In the pre-Islamic Era of Ignorance, people used to perform the ritual of *Ḥajj*, but it had become filled with pagan customs. One of these customs was that after people would finish the *Ḥajj*, they would sit and remember their ancestors. They would brag to each other by comparing the accomplishments of one another's ancestors and act arrogantly because of this.

In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ corrected this invalid custom. He instructed those who had completed the *Ḥajj* as follows: *"And when you finish your rites, then remember Allah like your (previous) remembrance of your fathers, or with a more ardent remembrance."*[1] People might miss their parents, grandparents, or ancestors, and remember them, but the feeling we have toward Allah ﷻ should be more intense and enthusiastic, because everything our parents, ancestors, or anyone else has given us is actually all from Allah ﷻ!

Whether one is feeling happy after finishing something difficult like *Ḥajj*, or in the midst of performing their tasks, Allah ﷻ reminds us about the importance of remembering Him. Even in a situation as complex and dangerous as a battle, the Qurʾān reminds us not to forget about Allah: *"O you who have faith! When you meet a host [in battle], then stand firm, and remember Allah a lot so that you may be successful."* [2]

AVOIDING NEGLIGENCE

There are two types or kinds of remembrance *(dhirk)*. The first type is when you remember after previously having forgotten, or having been heedless. This forgetting, or negligence/heedlessness–which is referred to in Arabic as *ghaflah*–is the opposite of remembrance *(dhikr)*. We do not ever want to have such negligence *(ghaflah)* and forget Allah ﷻ. Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: *"It is by the constant remembrance of Allah (dhirk) that heedlessness (ghaflah) is avoided."* [3]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 200.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 45.
3 Āmidī, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 300.

Activity 1.1a: Reflection

Read the following narrations *(aḥādīth)*, and choose one of them to write a reflection on.

1. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"I am surprised at the one who forgets, but is not forgotten (by Allah); I am surprised at the one who seeks the world, while death seeks them; and I am surprised at the one who is filled with laughter, while they do not know whether Allah is pleased or angry with them!"* [4]

   a. What are some of the outcomes of negligence that this narration *(ḥadīth)* mentions?

   b. When is it okay to "seek the world" and to be "filled with laughter?"

   c. Explain what you think the problems are with becoming a person like this.

2. Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: *"Woe be on the person who is overcome with heedlessness such that they forget the departure (from this world) and never prepare for it."* [5]

   a. Why do you think heedlessness *(ghaflah)* causes a person to stop thinking about the Hereafter?

   b. How should an individual prepare for the departure from this world?

4 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, P. 453.
5 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 727.

c. Explain what the danger is of living like this, where they forget about the Hereafter.

3. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"The intoxication of heedlessness and arrogance is harder to recover from than the intoxication of wine."* [6]

a. How do intoxicated people behave? Why do they act like this?

b. What do you think "intoxication of heedlessness and arrogance" really mean?

c. Why do you think the intoxication of heedlessness is so difficult to recover from?

In the *aḥādīth* above about negligence *(ghaflah)*, some of the outcomes of this state include not preparing for the Hereafter, and not being serious about what one needs to be serious about. When a person is intoxicated, they lose control of themselves and commit a lot of harm to themselves and others. One who is in a state of *ghaflah* can be more intoxicated than a drunk person when you take into account the spiritual harms and long term consequences of what they may do.

6 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 405.

WHY REMEMBER ALLAH ﷻ?

Dhikr means 'remembrance' and often refers to *dhikrullāh* which means the 'remembrance of Allah.'

The second type of *dhikr* is called *murāqabah*, which is a higher level of *dhikr*. It is 'when a person is constantly mindful of something that is worthy of giving attention to.' This means that you try to never fall into *ghaflah* [forgetting Allah ﷻ].

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ has told us that when we neglect to remember Allah ﷻ, then we are like a flying bird that has been targeted by a hunter and will be taken down from the sky.[7] We human beings are constantly being hunted by both the inner and outer evils *(Nafs* and *Shayaṭīn)*. As soon as someone falls into negligence and does not have that remembrance of Allah ﷻ, then these evils, especially Shayṭān, can attack the person. Often, one will then fall into a state of *ghaflah* which can lead to sin and spiritual pollution.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF DHIKR

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some ways we can remember Allah ﷻ (do *dhikrullāh)*? Try to think of obvious examples first, then ones that are less common.

Dhikr can be on the tongue (verbal), in the heart (silent), or in one's actions (practical).

Verbal recitations include:

- The literal recitation of Allah's Names. For example, reciting "Yā Allah" or "Yā Raḥmān" with a *tasbīḥ* or even just like that with one's tongue.
- The recitation of Qurʾān or supplications *(duʿās)*. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"Recite the Qurʾān and remember Allah frequently—for it is a cause of remembrance for you in the Heavens (by the angels), and a light for you on the Earth."*[8]
- The daily *ṣalāh* is also a form of *dhikr*.

Practical *dhikr* is to remember Allah ﷻ when a person is tempted with a sin, then to abstain from that sin due to the recognition that Allah ﷻ is aware of all our deeds.

The sin could be the desire to indulge in a forbidden pleasure, or it could be the temptation to speak evil about someone, or express anger, or backbite, etc. Remembering Allah ﷻ in such a situation will bring about the shame of sinning in the presence of Allah ﷻ, and hopefully stop you from performing that evil action.

If we know that without being alert and present with the remembrance of Allah ﷻ, our hearts can be preyed upon by Shayṭān who is always lurking around to catch us heedless, then why do we not constantly remain present with the remembrance of Allah in our hearts?

The combination of verbal *dhikr* and practical *dhikr* will help a person strengthen the remembrance of Allah ﷻ in one's heart. This 'hidden *dhikr'* in the heart is mentioned in the Qurʾān as follows:

"And remember your Lord within your heart humbly and reverentially (i.e. with awe), without being loud, in the mornings and the evenings; and do not be among the heedless."[9]

7 ʿAyyāshī, Muḥammad, *Tafsīr al-ʿAyyāshī*, Vol. 2, P. 296.
8 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khiṣāl*, P. 525.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-ʿArāf (7), Verse 205.

DHIKR IN OUR OWN LIVES

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some ways that you can incorporate *dhikr* into your daily life?

When we try to incorporate any habit into our daily lives, we should start by building small, consistent habits.

Here are some examples or habits that can help incorporate the remembrance of Allah ﷻ within our daily lives:

1. Reciting *bismillāh* before starting any action (for example, before eating, drinking, traveling, coming in and out of the home, etc.).
2. Saying *alḥamdulillāh* after an action (for example, after eating, drinking, finishing an exam, coming home safely, etc.).
3. Reading a consistent amount of the Noble Qurʾān every day (for example: 10 verses, or for 5 minutes).
4. Reciting *salawāt*[10] and other *adhkār*. Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān: *"Remember Me, (and) I will remember you…"* [11]
5. Conveying your *salām* to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and the 12 Imāms ﷺ especially the Imām of the time عجل الله فرجه at least once a day, preferably in the morning soon after you wake up.
6. Performing the *tasbīḥ* of Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ ﷺ[12] especially after the five daily *ṣalāh*. This has so many innumerable benefits.
7. Whenever you feel yourself being tempted by the inner or outer *Nafs* or *Shayaṭīn* to disobey the Almighty Creator, then verbally remember Allah ﷻ [by seeking refuge in Him from these evils], and practically remember Him by removing yourself from the place or thing which is tempting you.
8. Even when you are busy, try to take some short but regular breaks to feel grateful to Allah ﷻ for everything He has done for you and continues to do for you.
9. Regularly, perform intentional (not random!) acts of kindness and charity. In narrations we are told that these acts create the love of Allah ﷻ in our hearts.
10. Be committed to the practice of Islam in order to further Allah's love for you. Allah ﷻ says: *"Say: 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.'"* [13]

10 This is the recitation of *"Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammad wa āl Muḥammad"* which means "O Allah, send Your blessings upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad." This is a very beneficial recitation to engage in at all times.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 152.
12 This consists of the recitation of *Allāhu Akbar* 34 times, *Alḥamdulillāh* 33 times, and *Subḥānallāh* 33 times.
13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 31.

Activity 1.1b: Sayings from Āyatullāh Bahjat

With a partner or group, reflect on one of the following statements from the late, great scholar and gnostic, Āyatullāh Bahjat, may Allah ﷻ sanctify his soul,[14] and discuss what it means. How does it relate to the topic of this lesson?

1. "Abstinence from sins is not attained such that it becomes second nature, except through *muraqābah*[15] and the remembrance of Allah in every state, time, and place—in public and in private."

2. "We ourselves prepare the causes of danger, heedlessness, and forgetfulness of the remembrance of Allah, the Almighty. The defects of our acts become apparent as a result of *murāqabah* (watchfulness and attentive observation) and *muḥāsabah* (accounting and reckoning)."

3. "No remembrance *(dhikr)* is above practical *dhikr,* and no practical *dhikr* is above abandoning the disobedience [of Allah] in beliefs and practice; and apparently, no one can completely abandon disobedience without continuous *murāqabah* (watchfulness and attentive observation)."

4. "The verse of the Noble Qurʾān: *"Indeed, the hearts find ease (rest) in the remembrance (dhirk) of Allah"*[16] states that the remembrance *(dhikr)* of Allah ﷻ is the sole cause of the hearts attaining peace and tranquility. Based on this, can those who do not have peace, claim that they remember Him?"

14 These have been taken from his website which is: www.bahjat.ir.

15 This is a process whereby a person watches and guards over one's (spiritual) heart and gains insight into the heart's relation with its Creator and its own surroundings.

16 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verse 28.

Activity 1.1c: Review Questions

1. This lesson discussed taking small steps of implementation to incorporate *dhikr* into our lives. Based upon your reflection of this, and then reading the examples of habits, what steps would you offer to your community? How can we better implement *dhikr* in our daily lives?

2. In your own words, what is the difference between *ghaflah* and *dhikr*?

3. Why do we need *dhikr* in our lives? How does it make our faith *(īmān)* stronger?

4. What are the three different kinds of *dhikr*? Give an example of each.

1.2 Balance in Time Management

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Recognize the importance of time management in Islam.
- Develop strategies for managing a daily schedule.
- Identify how managing time wisely is an important element of adulthood and a successful life.

BALANCE IN TIME MANAGEMENT

Our time is not our own—it is a gift from Allah ﷻ. We are accountable for how we use this precious gift before it completely leaves us and we depart from this world. The greatest of human beings would always make good use of their time.

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: *"A believer's time should be divided into three parts: The part when one is in communion with Allah; a part when one strives for one's livelihood; and a part when one is free to enjoy what is lawful and pleasant. It does not behoove a wise person to be away (from one's house) except for three matters: namely for the purpose of earning, going for something for the next life, or for enjoying what is not prohibited."* [1] The Commander of the Faithful ؑ would divide his day as noted in this narration—never letting a single moment pass by in vain; and he was always in a state of the remembrance of Allah ﷻ.

The Qurʾān says:

> "O you who believe! Have God-consciousness (taqwā) of Allah and let every soul look over what it is sending forth for tomorrow–and have God-consciousness (taqwā). Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do." [2]

In this verse, we are asked to look over, and examine carefully, whatever we are "sending forth"—meaning what we have accomplished in terms of our deeds for the day. Without having a plan in mind about what we are trying to get out of that day, we will not be able to do any type of useful examination. That would be like an inspector being asked to certify a product for sale, like an iPhone, without any guidelines on what the product should be able to do in order for it to be certified!

Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: *"O people! Have the consciousness (taqwā) of Allah! No one has been created in vain or without a purpose (in life) such that it would be justified for them to spend their time in vain pursuits and distractions."* [3] This means that from the perspective of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, human beings have been created in such a dignified manner that it is beneath them to spend their time without any distinct purpose behind what they are supposed to be doing.

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Short Saying #390.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥashr (59), Verse 18.
3 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Short Saying #317.

Activity 1.2a: Class Discussion

Read the following narrations and story from the perspective of time management and leading a balanced life, then discuss them as a class.

- Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"The moments of your time are part of your lifespan. Spend the time that you have in what will be a source of your salvation [and success in the Hereafter]."* [4]
- Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"There is nothing more precious than your soul and your time."* [5]
- Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"No one truly understands the value of what remains of life except a Prophet or a truthful person (ṣiddīq)."* [6]
- ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī was one of our great scholars and the compiler of a Commentary of the Noble Qurʾān entitled, *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*. Among ʿAllāmah's outstanding qualities was his being very careful about his time. When he was busy writing *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, he did not write a draft [but instead wrote only one version of the text]. First, he wrote it without putting any dots on the text; then, when he was reviewing his writing, he added the dots at that time. People asked him: *"Why did you not put dots in the first version?"* He replied: *"I calculated the time involved in first writing without the dots, then putting in the dots when I edit the text, and I realized that I would save a certain amount of time by doing it this way."* [7]

DISCUSSION NOTES

4 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Ḥadīth #3642.
5 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 784.
6 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Ḥadīth #10801.
7 Reported by a student of ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāī.

Activity 1.2b: Dividing Your Day Properly

PART 1 DIRECTIONS: Make a list detailing the way you use the waking hours of your day. Start from the beginning of the day to the end of it. Since weekdays are often different from weekend days, make two separate lists: one for a typical weekday, and one for a typical weekend day. *Example:*

HOUR	ACTIVITY
6 am	Snoozing, *Fajr* Prayer
7 am	Breakfast
8 am	First class of school

WEEKDAY

TIME	ACTIVITY	CATEGORY

WEEKEND

TIME	ACTIVITY	CATEGORY

PART 2 DIRECTIONS: Find a partner. Work together to categorize the activities you listed in your schedule.

For instance, you may find “sports” as a common category, or “fun” or “school” or whatever umbrella topics you find.

Then try to identify major topics. You might have “basketball,” “gaming,” and “hanging out with friends” as some activities, then try to group them under something like “recreation.” Try to identify 4-5 major categories of activities. Share your major categories on the board.

Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ advised his followers to divide their time into four parts:

1. A portion for supplicating and conversing with Allah.
2. A portion for seeking one's livelihood (or going to school/college/university).
3. A portion for associating with brethren and trustworthy people who point out one's defects and sincerely treat a person in secret.
4. A portion for the permissible pleasures. Through this portion, an individual will be able to accomplish the other three parts.[8]

This *ḥadīth* highlights the importance of living a balanced life. The fourth portion, which could be referred to as "permissible *(ḥalāl)* downtime," is necessary in order to accomplish all the other parts. However, it should be scheduled, limited, and have a purpose and intention as well.

Activity 1.2c: Analyzing your Day

1. Evaluate the categories that you all shared in your initial exercise, and outline from an Islamic point of view which are:

   a. The most beneficial?

   b. A waste of time?

2. Share how you organized your activities under the Imām's categories.

3. What activities can be added or removed to effectively run our day as suggested by the Imām ﷺ?

   a. How can we squeeze them into our busy schedules?

8 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, Vol. 1, P. 409.

What we normally do in a day can be divided into two categories:

1. **Activities whose timings are fixed and cannot really be moved**, such as: sleeping, eating meals, reciting *ṣalāh*, and career-related things like work/school, etc.
2. **Activities that need to be scheduled in**, such as: increasing knowledge, acts of worship (other than *ṣalāh*), volunteering, giving charity, exercising, social relationships, entertainment, etc.

The Imām ﷺ is giving suggestions about how a person should strive to have some divisions or categories within one's day. This is beneficial advice. It is not meant to stipulate what is compulsory. Thus, if someone does not organize their lives into these categories, it does not imply that they are being sinful. However, they might be adopting an imbalanced lifestyle. The Imām ﷺ is giving general advice. Some people may have special circumstances that do not allow them to organize their lives into these particular groups.

Given our busy lifestyles, it might not be feasible to divide every single day into these categories. But at least it helps to know what is important, and it gives a general template to follow. Time is not meant to be divided equally among all of the suggested categories. It is likely that the second portion, for example, will take up the most time in a person's day.

Some of these categories may be applied directly, while others are indirect. For example, a student studies as a means of eventually earning a livelihood—that is indirect. Similarly, a homemaker may take care of domestic affairs as part of supporting others in the family rather than going out and earning a livelihood. However, supplicating and conversing with Allah ﷻ is done directly by everyone.

Even though in this lesson we are focusing on the *ḥadīth* of Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ, there are similar narrations from other members of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ as well. Some of them mention that at the end of the day, one should keep aside some time to take account of what they did that day.[9]

9 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 1, P. 390.

Activity 1.2d: Accounting Activity

During the day, one should keep aside some time to reflect on the day's activities—this is known in Arabic as *muḥāsabah*. A person should typically take 5-10 minutes to think through how they lived their life during that particular day. For example, one can contemplate on the following:

1. What successes did you have?
    - Did you ace your exam? If not, did you at least give it your best effort?
    - Did you make your family happy today (for some good reason)?
    - Was your prayer on time and/or with concentration?

2. What mistakes did you make?
    - Did your eyes wander at something impermissible?
    - Did you miss a daily prayer?
    - Did you get angry at your best friend without a valid reason?
    - What do you have to be thankful for today?

3. What do you think you can try to improve on tomorrow?

After reflecting on your day, you should seek forgiveness for the slips you made, and thank Allah ﷻ for the good actions you did. This helps you to keep track of the state of your soul; it gives you a sense of what you need to work on, and what positive traits you have that you should keep strengthening. You can think of it as a tune-up for your soul.

For this activity, you are going to do a detailed accounting once every few months. But, it will give you ideas on how to do your shorter sessions during the week. Go through the activity and make the lists. However, the list is for you alone, and for you to evaluate yourself. You should not share your slip ups and negative traits publically with anyone, so do not bring your list to class or tell anyone about your mistakes. That is between you and Allah ﷻ.

MUḤĀSABAH:
self-assessment for the purpose of improvement

Activity 1.2e: Reflection

Think about the key takeaways from this lesson. Write a brief reflection on what you learned through this lesson and how you can implement it in your daily life.

Presentation

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Print Out

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RQ-ZiEWKsbaxPG7XUis-_fGWR7q2s6eFNxjghJ2p7CQ/edit?usp=sharing

PRESENTATION:

PRINT OUT:

1.3 Silence, Solitude, and Contemplation

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify some of the reasons why Islam encourages silence.
- Explain the connection between silence and contemplation.
- Recognize ways that we can balance our time by adding contemplation into our daily routine.
- Explain methods of spiritual introspection, and how these methods can be incorporated into our everyday lives.

In a narration *(ḥadīth)* that is reported from Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, it is said that he was speaking to Abū Dharr and listed four traits that only a believer can attain. The first trait that he listed was:

الصَّمتُ وهُو أوَّلُ العِبادَةِ

"Silence, and it is the first stage of worship." [1]

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think this means? Why would silence be the first stage of worship?

EFFECTS OF CONSTANT CHATTER

Have you ever noticed how some people always speak what is on their minds? These are people who speak very often and constantly give their own opinions. You may notice though that such individuals are not always careful about **what** they say. They are sometimes more likely to say things that they regret later on.

In the past, speaking, conversing, and giving opinions would typically happen through the tongue. But in today's world, people can be constantly in conversation without even moving their tongue.

STOP AND REFLECT: How often do people that you know experience true silence?

1 Kāshānī, Muḥsin Fayḍ, *Al-Wāfī*, Vol. 26, P. 185.

Constantly being in conversation with others, and not giving our mind a chance to rest can negatively affect our spirituality and mental health. You may notice that if you are about to offer your prayers, and you were previously in the middle of doing something, then you are more likely to think about those things while praying.

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some recommended actions a person should perform before beginning the prayer that can help focus one's thoughts and prepare the heart?

One thing that is prescribed for us that can help with this is having intention and focus when we perform the preliminaries of prayer. For example, when one does *wuḍūʾ*, they should do so with intention. Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said:

> "A servant has been commanded to perform wuḍūʾ so as to be pure when standing before the All-Powerful; and by supplicating and obeying Him, one can be purged from filth and impurity; and (the performance of wuḍūʾ can also) remove laziness, expel sleep, and purify the heart to stand in the presence of the All-Powerful One." [2]

Even if we only have a short time because we are traveling, or praying during school hours, we should take a moment to focus our attention before we begin our *ṣalāh*. We can do this while we are performing our *wuḍūʾ*, then pause right before *Takbīratul Iḥrām* to make our intention. Every *ṣalāh* we perform should bring us closer to Allah ﷻ, and we can ask Him to help us make our prayers better, even if it is silently in our hearts.

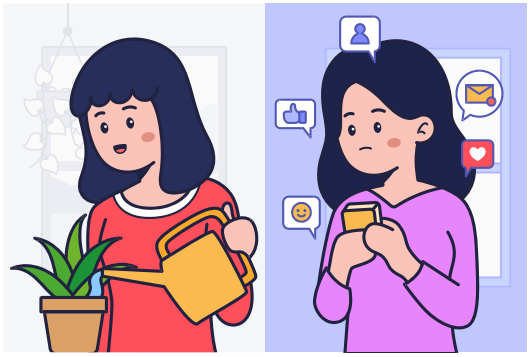
Every step that we perform before *ṣalāh* is meant to prepare our hearts. Āyatullāh Khomeini explains in his amazing book, *Ādāb aṣ-Ṣalāt* (The Disciplines of Prayers), that the *adhān* is meant to call on everything–both inward and outward, such as our organs, our limbs, our faculties of the soul [intellect *(ʿaql),* desires *(shahwah),* anger *(ghaḍab)],* the angels, and the creatures of this world—to pay attention to the Almighty. In the *iqāmah*, we are now calling these things to join this meeting (of prayer). Then finally, the *ṣalāh* itself is meant to bring us closer to Allah ﷻ, and we should leave everything else in this world behind us, as everything is in His hands.

STOP AND REFLECT: Under what circumstances do you have the best prayers?

2 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, Vol. 2, P. 99.

A professor who studies human behavior defined "solitude deprivation" as "a state in which you spend close to zero time alone with your own thoughts and free from any input of other minds." He went on to say:

> *As recently as the 1990s, solitude deprivation was difficult to achieve. There were just too many situations in everyday life that forced you to be alone with your thoughts, whether you wanted to or not—waiting in line, crammed into a crowded subway car, walking down the street, working in your yard. But today, as I have just argued, [solitude deprivation has] become widespread… Eliminating solitude also introduces new negative repercussions that we are only now beginning to understand. A good way to investigate a behavior's effect is to study a population that pushes the behavior to an extreme. When it comes to constant connectivity, these extremes are readily apparent among young people born after 1995—the first group to enter their preteen years with access to smartphones, tablets, and persistent internet connectivity. As most parents or educators of this generation will attest, their device use is constant… If persistent solitude deprivation causes problems, then we should see them show up here first… And this is exactly what we are finding."* [3]



Silence, solitude, and the mental activities that take place when we are alone with our thoughts can help us tremendously!

For example, if someone's mind is distracted with many thoughts, it is hard for them to focus on what they are about to do. We often think about all sorts of other things during our prayers. The many acts that are to be performed in solitude prescribed before saying *Takbīratul Iḥrām* prepare us for quieting our thoughts.

SILENCE AND CONTEMPLATION

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said:

اَلصَّمْتُ بِغَيْرِ تَفَكُّرٍ خَرَسٌ

"Silence without contemplation is merely muteness." [4]

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you understand from this narration?

Silence is meant to be spiritually productive. In our day and age, when we are constantly bombarded with information, silence for the sake of shutting off the stream of information might have a benefit. It might help us ready ourselves for spiritual wayfaring and self-building.

But silence—just for the sake of silence is not as valuable as contemplation.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ used to say: *"Arouse your heart to contemplation (tafakkur); keep your side clear for the night [pray at night or pre-dawn]; and be conscious of your Lord."* [5]

STOP AND REFLECT: According to the following passage from Āyatullāh Khomenei's famous book, *Forty Ḥadīth*, what is the ultimate purpose of contemplation?

"…in the noble traditions, an hour of reflection (tafakkur) is considered to be better than the worship (ʿibādah) of an entire year, or even that of sixty or seventy years. It is obvious that the ultimate goal and fruit of ʿibādah is the attainment of the knowledge and remembrance of Allah, and this is better attainable through valid contemplation…" [6]

3 Newport, Cal, *Digital Minimalism*, 2019, Pp. 145-147.
4 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 68.
5 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 254.
6 Āyatullāh Khomeini, *Forty Ḥadīth.*

Activity 1.3a: Research Reflection (Tafakkur)

1. Partner up, and use **www.tanzil.net**, or another resource to look up the root letter ف ك ر in the Qurʾān.

   a. Take 15 minutes to find three verses with this root. Then, examine the verses and find out what Allah ﷻ is telling us to reflect upon (do *tafakkur* of).

   b. Share a category that Allah ﷻ has told us to contemplate about.

Activity 1.3b: Qurʾānic Contemplation

In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ asks us to ponder over a number of things, some of these include:

1. The created world, and the wise way in which Allah created it.
2. The Power of Allah.
3. Human society and love.
4. Death and resurrection.

Below are some verses that will help us understand the topics mentioned above. In the lines that follow, write down what you think each verse means and what Allah ﷻ is trying to tell us.

a. *"Those who remember Allah standing, and sitting, and (lying) on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth [and say]: 'Our Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are You! So save us from the punishment of the Fire.'"* [7]

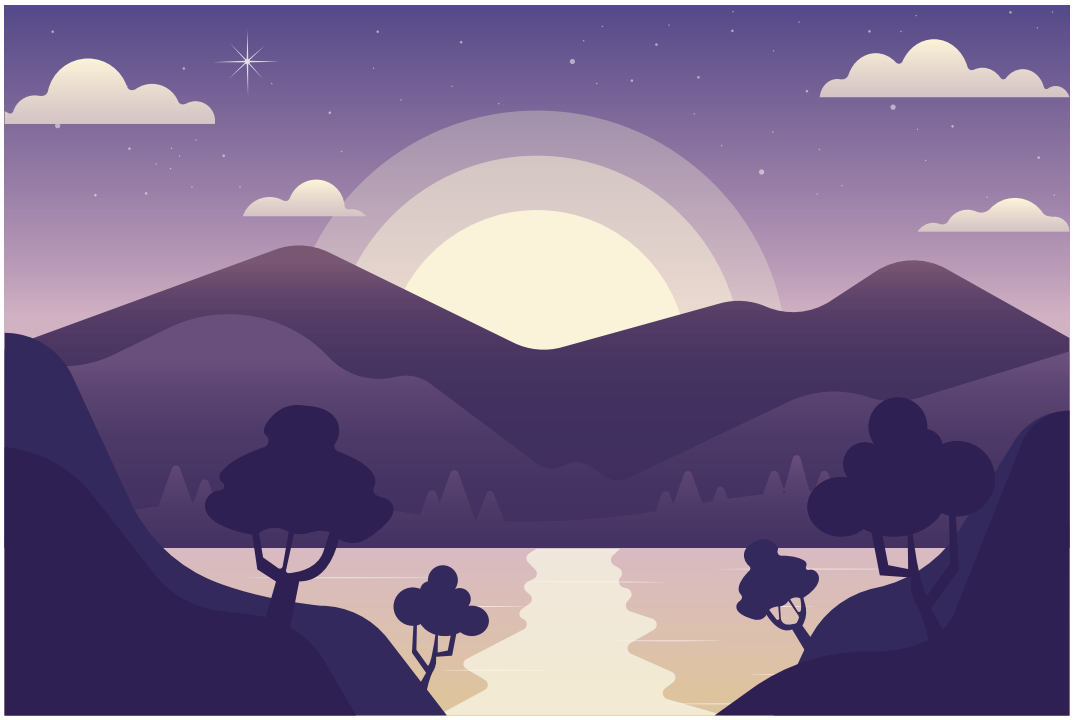
b. *"The parable of the life of this world is like that of water which We send down from the sky. It mingles with the earth's vegetation from which people and cattle eat. When the earth puts on its luster and is adorned, its inhabitants think they have power over it, (so) Our edict comes to it, by night or day, and We turn it into a mown field (We utterly destroy it), as if it did not flourish the day before. Thus do We elaborate the signs for people who reflect."* [8]

7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 191.
8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 24.

c. *"And among His signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort (and find tranquility) in them, and He placed affection and mercy between you. Indeed, there are signs in that for people who reflect."* [9]

d. *"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death; and (He takes the souls of) the ones who do not die in their sleep. Then He keeps those for whom He has ordained death, and releases the others until a specified time. Indeed, there are signs in that for people who reflect."* [10]

9 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verse 21.
10 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 42.



THE CREATED WORLD

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّـهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَـٰذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

"Those who remember Allah standing, and sitting, and (lying) on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth [and say]: 'Our Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are You! So save us from the punishment of the Fire.'" [11]

This verse is explaining that all of the universe with its harmony indicates that Allah ﷻ is All-Wise, and that everything has been created for a purpose. This should humble us and help us develop a sense of obedience to our Lord, such that we ask Him for salvation.

Therefore, go and look at the beauty and stunning preciseness of the world, and contemplate on how beautiful and powerful Allah is—this will help you develop a sense of awe of your Lord.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۖ وَمِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۖ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"And it is He who spread out the earth and set in it firm mountains and streams; and of every fruit He made therein two kinds. He causes the night to cover over the day. Indeed, there are signs in that for people who reflect." [12]

We realize through this verse that we are totally dependent on Allah ﷻ for all of our nourishment, and everything else. Thus, we must develop a sense of gratitude and thankfulness for His giving us food and drink, mountains and streams, and the night to take rest in.

11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 191.
12 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verse 3.

THE POWER OF ALLAH ﷻ

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْأَمْسِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"The parable of the life of this world is like that of water which We send down from the sky. It mingles with the earth's vegetation from which people and cattle eat. When the earth puts on its luster and is adorned, its inhabitants think they have power over it, (so) Our edict comes to it, by night or day, and We turn it into a mown field (We utterly destroy it), as if it did not flourish the day before. Thus do We elaborate the signs for people who reflect." [13]

Here, Allah ﷻ is explaining that we should contemplate the fleeting nature of this world—that our lives are short and all power is in His hands. He gives us many blessings, but in an instant, He can take them all away. This can happen when and if we begin to become arrogant, or think that our blessings are due to our own power. But when we reflect and realize that all blessings come from Allah ﷻ alone and we are thankful, then Allah ﷻ will bless us with even more.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۗ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"[We sent them] with manifest proofs and scriptures. And We have sent down the reminder to you (the Qur'ān) so that you may clarify for the people that which has been sent down to them, so that they may reflect." [14]

This verse is telling us to contemplate on the meanings of the Qur'ān. Therefore, we must know at least some of the Qur'ān, recite and read it regularly; and as we reflect upon it, then we will be able to live our lives in line with the teachings of Allah ﷻ as taught to us by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ. However, if we only recite the Qur'ān without contemplation, then we are not taking all that the Qur'ān has to offer us which is true guidance and success for all of humanity.

13 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 24.
14 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Naḥl (16), Verse 44.

HUMAN SOCIETY AND LOVE

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَّوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"And among His signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort (and find tranquility) in them, and He placed affection and mercy between you. Indeed, there are signs in that for people who reflect." [15]

This verse tells us that we should reflect on the beauty of the institution of marriage that Allah ﷻ has placed between a man and a woman. Think of an elderly couple that you admire, like your grandparents, and how they live with one another with respect, love, and dignity. The Almighty created human beings to support others: to help each other in this life through mutual work toward a good worldly life, and to assist one another to grow and become better individuals for an everlasting life of bliss in the Hereafter. We need to comfort and strengthen others emotionally and spiritually, and protect each other from feelings of isolation and weakness.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

اللَّـهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا ۖ فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death; and (He takes the souls of) the ones who do not die in their sleep. Then He keeps those for whom He has ordained death, and releases the others until a specified time. Indeed, there are signs in that for people who reflect." [16]

This verse helps us realize that every day we go into a state where we have no control over our own souls—and this is during sleep. Similarly, when it is our time to die, we will have no control over our souls or anything at all. Reflection helps us realize that we have very little control over our own selves, much less the length of our lives. Thus, we must hasten to strengthen our relationship with Allah ﷻ and become closer to Him so that we die as Muslims with pure hearts.

15 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah ar-Rūm (30), Verse 21.
16 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 42.

SILENCE AND ACCOUNTING

Muḥāsabah means 'to take something to account.' For example, in the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ uses this word as follows:

...وَإِن تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُم بِهِ اللَّهُ...

"...Whether you disclose what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it..." [17]

It is recommended that we spend a few minutes every night reflecting on our day: we should thank Allah ﷻ for all the good things we were able to accomplish, and the countless blessings that we received; and we must seek forgiveness from Allah ﷻ for any sins we committed that day.

Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ؑ said:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يُحَاسِبْ نَفْسَهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ مَرَّةً

"A person who does not take account of one's own soul once every day is not from us." [18]

The term "not from us" is found in several narrations and it means that 'the person who does or does not do that particular action' is not following the path of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SILENCE, SOLITUDE, AND CONTEMPLATION

A person may ask how can we practically apply this advice of observing silence, and contemplating more? Here are some tips:

- Practice speaking (and typing) less whenever possible.
- Cut out or disregard some of the extraneous information we take in.
- Spend a few minutes in silence, or perform the recommended acts before every *ṣalāh*.
- Before we go to sleep, spend a few minutes in silence, and reflect on our day's actions and think of what we can improve tomorrow (this is called *muḥāsabah* as explained above).
- During different times during the day, take out a few minutes to re-orientate our mind and think about the various blessings that Allah ﷻ has showered upon us.
- Spend time reflecting on Allah's Power, Beauty, and different Attributes.
- Ask Allah to: "Speak to you, so that you may truly live!"

17 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 284.
18 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 453.

Activity 1.3c: Evaluate Your Life

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine that you have just died. Your soul is waiting to be transferred to the Intermediary World (the *Barzakh*) between this world and your eternal abode. There is a piece of paper and a pen laid in front of you that states:

In order to move on to the next stage of your life, you must evaluate the following:

1. Make a list of various sins *(muḥarramāt)* and obligations *(wājibāt)*. Then review your life to determine if you performed all your obligations and avoided all the sins.

2. Make a list of the friendships and relationships you had in your life, and consider if they were in line with the Right Path.

3. Make a list of your inner feelings (anxiety, fear, contentment, arrogance, pride, love, mercy, empathy, etc.) and contemplate on them to evaluate whether there were any that needed to be improved.

Activity 1.3d: Reflection

As we know, after death, we will all be questioned about how we spent our time in this world. It may not be exactly like this activity, but it was just meant to be an exercise to self-reflect.

Think of the answers you came up with for Activity 1.3c. *Alḥamdulillah,* we still have time to amend these answers and fix any issues we have.

1. What strategies can you come up with to ensure that all your obligations are met and continue to be met?

2. What are characteristics and traits you can look for within friendships and relationships that will help you stay on the Right Path?

3. How can you work on improving the feelings above? Come up with 2-3 things you can implement in your life.

1.4 Depression and Anxiety: Part 1

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand and explain the difference between depression and anxiety.
- Learn about what the Qurʾān says in regards to stress factors.
- Recognize what it means to rely on Allah ﷻ in our hardest times, especially through struggle with the self *(Jihādun Nafs)*.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

> "Blessed are those who have performed the minor struggle [or battle] (Jihādul Aṣghar), and have yet to perform the major struggle [or battle] (Jihādul Akbar)."

He was asked: *"O Messenger of Allah! What is the major struggle (Jihādul Akbar)?"*

He replied: *"Jihādun Nafs (the struggle against one's self)."* [1]

In our day to day lives, we tend to forget that in order to become closer to Allah ﷻ, we must go through different tests and difficulties in this world. To do well in these tests, we have to hold on to our faith, and be persistent in our struggles to achieve our final goal. Internal struggles are very difficult, because we are dealing with an opponent that is unseen and often elusive. This is one of the reasons why the internal struggle is known as the "bigger or major struggle."

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think it means to struggle against your own self? Why is this so difficult, yet so important?

Jihādun Nafs—the struggle against the self—means to struggle against the negative desires and feelings that try to steer a person away from what Allah ﷻ wants.

Let us look at some simple examples. Someone might have the desire to eat something that is forbidden *(ḥarām)*. If they decide not to eat it, then they have overcome a desire that came from themselves or from Shayṭān. Another example is when someone feels very angry, but they restrain themselves and decide not to use harsh or abusive language.

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥar al-Anwār*, Vol. 67, P. 65.

Activity 1.4a: Scenarios

What scenarios can you come up with as examples of *Jihādun Nafs*? One example has been provided for you.

SCENARIO 1: Someone becomes very angry at their best friend. However, instead of using harsh words, they decide to restrain themselves and walk away.

SCENARIO 2:

SCENARIO 3:

SCENARIO 4:

Whenever we go through these struggles, Allah ﷻ knows. He knows that struggling internally is very difficult indeed, and therefore He promises to give special aid to those who depend on Him during their challenges in life. We should never feel as if no one understands us, or no one is there to help us out, as Allah ﷻ is always there to assist us.

STRUGGLING WITH OUR HEALTH

Sometimes our internal struggles are related to controlling our desires or taming our anger. At other times, our internal struggles can be related to our physical or mental health. In this lesson, we will focus on struggles of depression and anxiety, and ways that we can manage our own mental state.

Depression is a mental state where someone feels **sad and depressed** over a long period of time.

Anxiety is a mental state where someone feels **stressed and panicked** over a long period of time.

"Long-term or long period of time" in these definitions means longer than what would normally be seen as proportionate to what caused the feelings. For example, someone may feel depressed for months after someone close to them passes away, but at some point during the year, it is normal to continue daily activities again.

Anxiety is when we show symptoms of something dangerous being present when there is no real danger around us. For example, when we have an exam coming up, or a major assignment due in class, we might feel our heart rate go up, or feel like it is difficult to think, or even hyperventilate. This is all pretty normal. However, if we have any of these symptoms when there is **no** danger present, then we are anxious. Feeling this often can mean we have anxiety.

IS IT OKAY TO BE SAD OR ANXIOUS?

It is perfectly fine to feel sad or sometimes grieve over events that have occurred, as long as this sadness and grief do not go to an extreme, or prevent us from fulfilling our responsibilities. When we notice that our sadness or stress is preventing us from doing our daily activities, then it is important for us to learn how to manage these feelings so that we can have a sense of tranquility within ourselves, even when we are challenged.

Throughout this lesson, we will talk about different causes for depression or anxiety, but this is not meant to encourage self-diagnosis. Someone who has a psychological problem should seek help from those who are qualified to offer it. Also, if you ever have feelings of depression, stress, or anxiety, then the advice in this lesson can still help even if you do not have these feelings for prolonged periods of time.

THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE!

Allah ﷻ made our bodies and minds in such a way that we move toward healing.

This is a beautiful aspect of the way He designed the laws of this world. When we get a cut or a scrape, our skin eventually tends to heal over that injury. Similarly, bad events that happen to us–when they are fresh in our minds—can be very painful. But with the passing of some time, our minds naturally tend to purge the sorrowful memories, and things eventually become more bearable.

However, just as deeper wounds or cuts may need to be treated in order for proper healing to take place, we may need to alter our behavior or mindset toward different events that take place in order for us to heal better.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why is having hope and belief in Allah ﷻ important to overcome pain?

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Mental health problems can be caused by a number of factors relating to lifestyle, habits, and perspectives. Some of these include:

Nutrition

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"Let man [carefully] consider his food."* [2] In general, having a varied, well-rounded, and healthy diet can help—not only our physical health—but also our mental health. This is because overeating or eating unhealthy foods can often lead to low energy levels, which may exacerbate the feeling of low energy we may already have when we are feeling down about something. There are also certain foods or drinks that may exacerbate feelings of anxiety. For example, energy drinks contain large amounts of sugar, as well as caffeine, and both of these substances can exacerbate feelings of anxiety.

Some examples of the major negative consumption habits that one should try to avoid include:

- drinking energy drinks and soft drinks on a regular basis
- eating fast food or take-away on a regular basis
- excessively eating junk food such as biscuits, cakes, chocolates, chips, ice-cream, candy, etc.

Having a healthy and well-rounded diet—and avoiding the things listed above—will help us to maintain good mental well-being.

In the next lesson, we will look more at the importance of diet and nutrition, and its connection between what we eat and how we feel.

Stress and exhaustion

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"Indeed, during the day you have drawn-out (prolonged) engagements."* [3] If we have a lot of stress in our daily lives, then we may feel depressed or anxious. Oftentimes, we cannot change unpleasant situations much, but we can change the way we anticipate and prepare for them. Doing so can really help in reducing the unpleasantness. For example, if we have an exam coming up in school, then we have to plan ahead and study in advance—not procrastinate.

Other times, we may be adding too many things to our schedules, such as taking on more extracurricular activities than we can handle. This is where we need to ask ourselves, why do we feel pressured to do so much? Pressure can be positive if it takes us away from laziness. But in other cases, "less" can actually be "more." We should do things with purpose, and try to cut back on doing those things which may be causing us too much stress. In reality, fulfilling our responsibilities, like doing what is obligatory *(wājib)* and staying away from what is forbidden *(ḥarām)*, and being good to others, are amongst things that can cause us some stress. Therefore, a bit of stress is natural, but we should find a balance in how much we commit to so that we do not experience excessive stress that could lead to an anxiety disorder.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ʿAbasa (80), Verse 24.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Muzzammil (73), Verse 7.

Activity 1.4b: Mindset Shifts

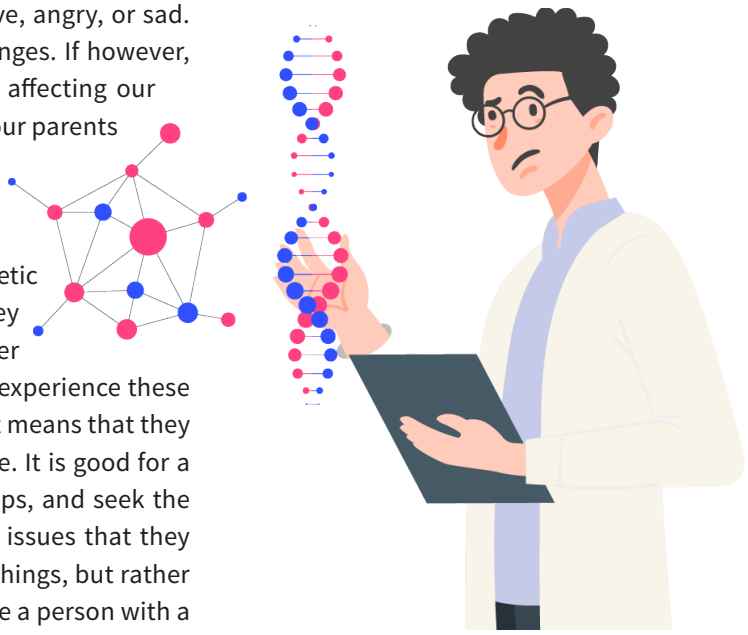
Complete the following chart with a mindset shift that you can have about daily activities/responsibilities to decrease the level of stress they may present.

FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
I cannot make this situation any better.	
I just cannot do math. It is way too hard.	
I make way too many mistakes—I am always failing.	
I am absolutely no good at this.	

1. How can changing our mindset when we feel stressed or overwhelmed help us feel more at peace about those things?

Hormonal changes in the body

Changes in our hormones often occur around the time of puberty. This will impact the way our body looks, as well as how we emotionally respond to certain situations. As we grow older, we may realize that part of the changes we are experiencing as we go through puberty may be associated with being more sensitive, angry, or sad. Exercising regularly and eating properly can help with these challenges. If however, we find that the psychological changes we are going through are affecting our ability to function in our daily lives, then it may be good to speak to our parents first off; then in some cases, a medical professional if need be.



Genetics

Just as physical problems like diabetes have a hereditary or genetic component, some people's genetic makeup may mean that they could be more prone to experiencing depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues. It does not mean that a person will definitely experience these problems, or that they will experience them in all stages of life, but it means that they **may be** more susceptible to these when faced with difficulties in life. It is good for a person to be aware of this, so that they can take the necessary steps, and seek the right help, to reduce the chances, or severity of the mental health issues that they may face. It does not mean that a person has no choice over these things, but rather that this is something they need to be extra cautious about. (Just like a person with a family history of diabetes needs to be extra careful about gaining excessive weight).

Reaction to the change of seasons

It is common for people to feel more depressed or exhausted simply because of the change in seasons. This is a natural reaction for some human beings. In certain people, this reaction can be quite profound. Thus, it is good to be aware of this if we notice that our mood changes during the colder months when the days are shorter and the nights are longer. We can try to counteract this by actively scheduling outdoor time even during the colder months (where possible), as well as exercising regularly, and scheduling other enjoyable activities such as socializing with family and friends.

Trauma experienced earlier in life can lead to long-term consequences

Sometimes, when we have not fully recovered from, or understood why something happened to us, it can often continue to affect how we view new situations. For example, if we spent some time around people who always put us down or were quick to criticize us, then we might have a tendency to doubt ourselves or have low self-esteem. This may manifest itself as anxiety, and we begin to worry about our ability to complete even small tasks.

It is important to talk to a trusted individual about these past events, and understand them in the light of the teachings of our faith. Remember, you are never alone or unwanted. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

> "And He is with you wherever you are." [4]

4 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Ḥadīd (57), Verse 4.

We need to learn how to process the emotions related to these past events, and place our full trust in Allah ﷻ knowing that He will help us in every challenge we face in our lives.

Having said this, it is also important not to inappropriately blame past life events for mistakes we may be making. At the end of the day, we are making our own choices and are fully responsible for these choices. While past events and experiences may impact our initial emotional reactions, this is not an excuse to do the wrong thing.

An incorrect outlook on life, and the nature of this world

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

> "And why should we not put our trust in Allah, seeing that He has guided us in our ways? Surely, we will put up patiently with whatever torment you may inflict upon us, and in Allah let all the trusting (ones) put their trust." [5]

We should all strive to work toward having a better outlook on the world. As we go through life's challenges, we should contemplate on our view of the world, and work on having hope and reliance on Allah ﷻ. Sometimes, we might have flaws and spiritual diseases that get in the way of us moving forward—like pride, anger, or despair; and oftentimes, we might want to have too much control over our lives or situations that are not in our power, and must realize that they are all under the Will of Allah ﷻ.

Am I a sinner if I feel depressed or anxious?

Sinning, and feeling depressed or anxious, are two different things. Based on what has been mentioned above, even if someone has faith and reliance in Allah ﷻ, they can still experience depression for various reasons, such as genetics, physical health problems, or difficult life situations.

However, a believer should have more reason to be watchful over oneself because they understand how precious a human being is to Allah ﷻ. Hopelessness can cause a person to feel worthless, and eventually lead one to a life of carelessness and disobedience. This means that if we notice we are getting depressed or anxious, we should actively attempt to seek out the root causes (such as those mentioned above) in order to allow Allah's healing process to take effect. Inshāʾ Allah, this will help us increase our trust *(tawakkul)* in the Almighty One, and then in our overall health. We should always believe that we are able to be healed, and can get better with the help of Allah ﷻ.

We should also remember that all sins leave an effect, and sometimes those effects can show up in the form of depression or anxiety. This is because sins go against the grain of our innate nature *(fiṭrah)*, so when we commit a sin, an internal conflict begins to occur within our self. Prolonged conflict within the soul can then manifest as depression or anxiety.

Sinning deliberately and repeatedly causes a person to become distant from Allah ﷻ—which was a state that the Prophets ﷺ and Imāms ﷺ feared so much that they would repeatedly pray for protection from it! Not having Allah ﷻ present in our lives will open the doors of grief over the past and anxiety about the future. Therefore, when searching for the root causes of depression or anxiety, we should also see how we can strengthen our connection to Allah ﷻ by avoiding what is impermissible and forbidden *(muḥarramāt)*, and performing our obligations *(wājibāt)*.

5 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 12.

Activity 1.4c: Understanding Myself

Directions: Answer the following questions as honestly as you can. Do not share your answers with anyone. Only include those things that you actually want to implement in your life.

1. What are some habits you would like to improve to help your physical health? (For example: in regards to sleeping, exercising, etc.).

a. What are some goals you can make to improve your physical health? (For example: walking every day, sleeping earlier at night, etc.).

b. What are some Islamic habits you would like to improve?

c. What are some goals you can make for Islamic habits? (For example: read x amount of Qurʾān every day, recite some extra supplications once a week, etc.).

2. What are some things that you know make you feel anxious, depressed, or sad?

a. What are ways that you can work on reducing these feelings? If you are not too sure, then who can you talk to about your feelings?

3. What questions do you have in regards to reducing feelings of depression or anxiety?

a. Who could you talk to about these questions?

DAILY REFLECTION

Either in the calendar below or in your own journal, create a schedule of how you want to implement some of these changes (this does not have to be too extensive). You can also do this over the week. Bring back your schedules to the next class.

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

1.5 Depression and Anxiety: Part 2

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Analyze statistics about the overall trends seen in regards to technology and mental health.
- Understand the significant role that sleep patterns play in our mental health, and our ability to handle stressful situations.
- Examine our own technology and social media usage to gain insight into the impact it has on us.
- Look at some mindset shifts that can help us in our daily lives.

As we mentioned in the previous lesson, *Jihādun Nafs* means to struggle against the self, or the internal struggle. This is the greater struggle *(jihādul akbar)*, and is even more difficult than fighting on the battlefield.

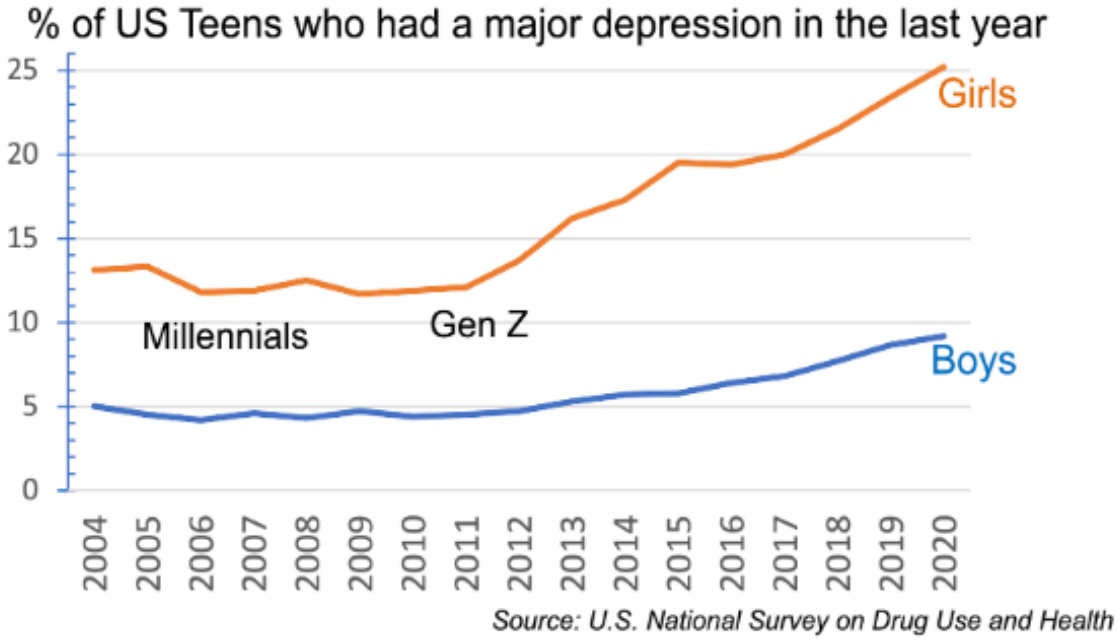
STOP AND REFLECT: Why might struggling against the self be the most difficult thing to do?

As we try to improve ourselves and get closer to Allah ﷻ, there are many things that may pull us down. Sometimes our mental or physical health may take a toll on us, and it is important that we pay attention to what we are struggling with and determine the source.

Depression is a mental state where someone feels sad and sorrowful over a long period of time. Anxiety is a mental state where someone feels stressed and panicked over a long term. "Long-term or long period of time" in these definitions means longer than what would normally be seen as proportionate to what caused the feelings in the first place.

Activity 1.5a: Examine the Graph

Examine the following graph, which shows the percentage of US teens who experienced a major depression episode in the last 12 months,[1] then answer the questions below.



1. What overall trends do you notice over the years?

1 Haidt, J., and J. Twenge (2021). *Is there an increase in adolescent mood disorders, self-harm, and suicide since 2010 in the USA and UK? A review*. Unpublished manuscript, New York University.

2. Is the trend more pronounced in boys or girls? Can you think of any societal scenarios that might lead to this?

3. In which year do you observe a significant rise?

4. Smartphones became widely available to teenagers in 2012. How does this data reflect the connection between smartphones and mental health? Why? Provide at least one specific example.

This graph shows that depression is a serious issue which a lot of teenagers face. Even though statistically, teenage girls are more affected by it than teenage boys, it is still a prevalent problem among boys also, and is affecting more individuals as the years progress. In the previous lesson, we mentioned some of the causes of depression and anxiety. In this lesson, we will continue to examine some of the root causes behind these illnesses.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY RELATED TO EXHAUSTION

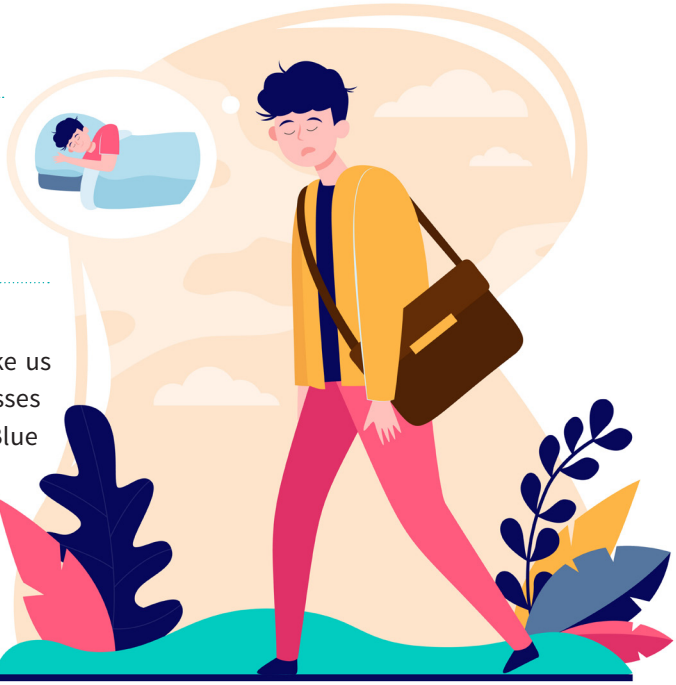
Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

> "...[Did we not] make your sleep (a means of) rest? And make the night a covering? And make the day for livelihood?" [2]

It is very important to have good sleep habits in order to maintain positive health. Unfortunately, in the modern lifestyle, many people are in a state of chronic fatigue where they feel tired all the time. If individuals continue at the pace they are going, then they will eventually reach a type of burn out, and their bodies will no longer serve them the way they would like.

It is very important to give ourselves downtime where we rest our minds, and avoid any kind of distractions or stimuli, such as the stimuli from screens. For example, regularly taking a walk in nature can help provide rest to our minds.

Allah ﷻ has created everything in this world with perfect design and harmony, like the sun rising and setting with a rhythm. Our physical body also operates according to certain rhythms known as **circadian rhythms**. Light is the most important factor in aligning these circadian rhythms. When we fall asleep during the day and stay awake during the night, then we have to be very careful about this because we are ignoring our body's rhythms and its alignment with day and night. We should try to act according to the Qur'ān by using the night to sleep and the day for our various activities.



STOP AND REFLECT: Have you ever felt drained after spending too much time on your computer, or watching too much TV, or being on your gaming device for way too long? Why do you think that is?

Sunlight contains blue light, which stimulates parts of the brain that make us feel alert, elevating our body temperature and heart rate. Blue light suppresses the body's release of melatonin–a hormone that makes us feel drowsy. Blue light however, can be produced by sources other than the sun. Screens and LED bulbs also produce blue light. Being exposed to blue light in the evening can trick our brain into thinking that it is still daytime–disrupting circadian rhythms, and leaving us feeling alert instead of tired.

Chronic misalignment of circadian rhythms can also lead to many negative health impacts, including metabolic disorders and mental health conditions such as depression.[3]

2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah an-Naba' (78), Verses 9-11.
3 See https://www.sleepfoundation.org/bedroom-environment/blue-light for more information about this.

Here are some tips to have a fulfilling sleep:

- Have a dark sleeping environment.
- Have a sleep-time ritual where you prepare your body and mind for falling asleep.
- Dim the lights 1-2 hours before bedtime.
- Do not use any screens at least one hour before you head to sleep.
- If you read before going to sleep, then use a special lamp that does not have blue light.
- Do not use any devices while you are in bed.
- The last waking moments of the day are a great time to reflect on the day, praise Allah ﷻ for any accomplishments you made, and seek His forgiveness for any shortcomings. This is also a good time for supplications, reading the Qur'ān, and other types of calming activities.
- Make sure to get the recommended amount of sleep for your age.
- Try to sleep nice and early!

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY RELATED TO NUTRITION

It is important to eat a balanced diet, and avoid overloading the body with food that is toxic or harmful. The following foods should be avoided or taken in careful amounts:[4]

- energy drinks and soft drinks
- fast food or take-away food
- junk food such as: biscuits, cakes, chocolates, ice-cream, chips, and candy

We should also try to be aware of how food changes our mood or slows us down. Too much caffeine, or caffeine late in the day can make us feel anxious or keep us from sleeping. Too many sugary or unhealthy foods might slow us down as well.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY RELATED TO PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Some types of depression are caused by underlying physical conditions that need to be diagnosed and treated by a health professional. Generally speaking, maintaining good physical health through exercising regularly can help with mental health. Choose exercise that you like to do, and make sure to be consistent! Generally this can help your mood over time, as long as you are not overstraining yourself.[5] The recommended amount of exercise advised by health professionals is 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY RELATED TO RELATIONSHIPS

Having good and healthy relationships with other people contributes significantly to mental well-being. Online relationships alone are not sufficient. In fact, being in touch with people only online can lead to even worse mental health problems. Sure, a certain amount of connection online can be useful, but our primary company should be in the form of real, in-person relationships to the extent possible.

4 There are many opinions in the field of nutrition about what is and is not healthy. Here we have tried to summarize some of the most commonly cited trigger foods that can lead to an internal imbalance.

5 Doyne EJ, Ossip-Klein DJ, Bowman ED, Osborn KM, McDougall-Wilson IB, Neimeyer RA, *Running versus weight-lifting in the treatment of depression.* J Consult Clin Psychol. 1987. In a study, 40 volunteers who were diagnosed with depression were split into groups and completed different tasks over an eight-week period. Those who did running and weight-lifting showed significant reductions in depression, compared to those who did no special physical exercises.

Activity 1.5b: Technology and Mental Health

Social media and technology have played a huge role in the decline of mental health over recent years. In this activity, you will consider your relationship with social media, and analyze the impact it has on you.

Complete the survey below outlining your technology and social media usage.

1. How long do you spend on devices (laptop, tablet, cell phone, etc.) during the day?

2. During this time, how long do you spend on each of the following:

   a. Social Media

   b. Homework

   c. Email

   d. Games

   e. Shopping

3. Take notes below as you scroll through social media today.

   a. Do you find yourself shopping more or wanting more material objects through scrolling Instagram or Facebook?

   b. Does it distract you from completing your homework sometimes?

   c. Are you able to put it away immediately when you need to help your parents, or complete your daily prayers *(ṣalāh)*?

4. Have you ever felt that excessive technology and social media usage has led you to compare yourself to others? Explain.

5. Why might being in contact with individuals primarily online lead to this type of comparison more than in-person relationships?

Not all relationships are healthy. There are some people who can be toxic for us, our mental health, and/or our practice of religion. For example, there may be some people who are always negative and pessimistic, and we might notice that these people make us feel depressed as well. We should try to help such people see things in a different way and be more optimistic and hopeful in life. There may come a time however, when we need to decrease our contact with them if possible, in order to maintain our own health and commitment to our religion.

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY RELATED TO OUR VIEW ON THE WORLD

Once we have started to make some changes in our habits—such as exercising, watching our diet, or sleeping better—we might notice that there are still issues that are causing feelings of depression or anxiety. It may also be difficult to begin some of these changes in our daily lives without having a change in perspective first.

Many times with anxiety and depression, the triggers come from a feeling that one should have complete control over the situation. For example, if a person has anxiety near their school exams, then the way to treat it may be to shift one's perspective on how important the exams are, and how much control one has over the final result. One might feel a lot of pressure on themselves to do well, and think that the result is entirely in their control. However, a more balanced perspective is to remember that once you study well and try your best, then everything else is in Allah's hands, and you should just pray for the best.

"Is not Allah sufficient for His servant? And they threaten you with those other than Him. And whoever Allah leads astray, for them there is no guide." [6]

6 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 36.

Activity 1.5c: Mindset Shifts

In the previous lesson, you completed a table demonstrating a shift in mindset to reduce stress. Consider more mindset shifts that may help you in your daily life, such as the example below. Complete at least three more mindset shifts that can be helpful for you in your daily life, and design a poster or bumper sticker to help you remember that. The goal is that this is something you can look at as a gentle reminder when you are feeling overwhelmed.

FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
I have to study endlessly because the result is in my hands.	I will make a study plan and try my absolute best and know that once I have done that, everything else is in Allah's hands.

Suppose you do not get accepted into the school or a sports team that you were hoping for. You might feel disappointed, but if you were praying for what is best, then you need to trust that Allah ﷻ knows what is best for you and that is what He ordained to happen.

When the root cause of feelings of depression or anxiety is a flawed perspective on reality, then working on strengthening our trust in Allah ﷻ—which is called *tawakkul* in Arabic—will help us through our difficult times, if Allah ﷻ wills. Learning more about Allah ﷻ and strengthening our beliefs in Monotheism *(Tawḥid)* will also help us.

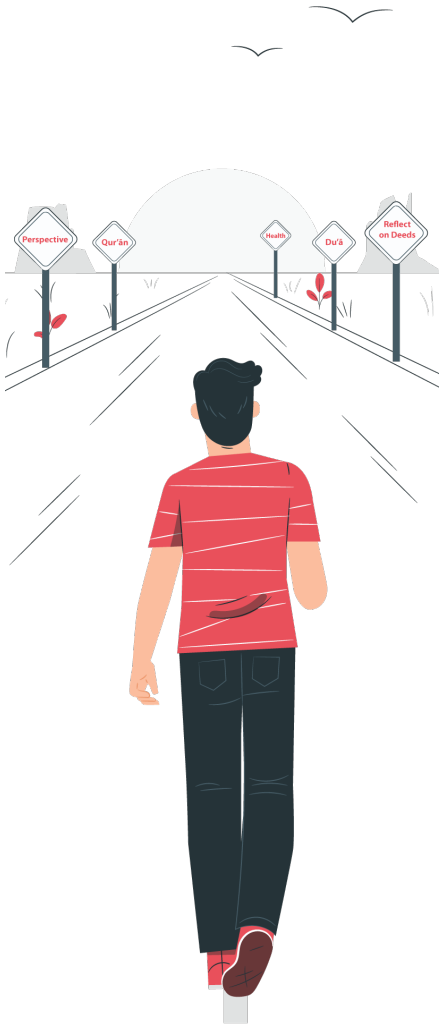
TIPS FOR DEALING WITH DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

1. Take Care of Our Physical Health:

In this and the previous lesson, we mentioned many different health issues that can contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety. We should be sure to pay attention to our health, exercise, and sleep. If we are still feeling symptoms of fatigue or depression and anxiety, then it is important that we talk to our parents, or a medical professional to see if we have other underlying health issues.

2. Make Duʿāʾ:

Allah ﷻ is the One who gives us guidance and can remove our difficulties. As much as we work on our health or other things, Allah ﷻ is the One who can cure us of all our ailments, so we should pray to Him for guidance and help. There are many powerful prayers which can be found in Imām as-Sajjād's Book of Supplications, such as the whispered prayer for the hopeful ones, or his plea for the removal of worries and troublesome situations.



3. Recite the Qurʾān:

When we read the Book of Allah ﷻ, it strengthens our heart and provides us with guidance. It is best to choose a consistent amount that we can commit to reciting on a daily basis, even if it is for like 10 minutes a day.

4. Work on Our Perspective:

We should always be working on our perspective and ask ourselves why we are having feelings of depression and anxiety. Sometimes if the cause is physical, then it can be as simple as fixing our sleep schedule to give us more energy to think. Sometimes though, we might need help with understanding our responsibilities, or remembering the fact that everything is truly under Allah's control. Sometimes we may need to talk to someone who can give us better advice, like a scholar, or our parents, or a friend, or a role model who understands the Islamic perspective, to help guide us to understand the circumstances of our life better.

5. Take Account (Muḥāsabah) of Our Actions:

We talked about how we should reflect on our deeds every single day. This can really help us have a true perspective on what we are doing well, and what we need to work on. It can motivate us to do better everyday.

Activity 1.5d: Understanding Myself

In the last lesson, you were asked to reflect on how to improve your habits, and how to improve yourself over time. Below, contemplate on how your last week went in the following areas:

1. Habits I would like to improve to help my physical health.

2. Islamic habits I would like to improve.

3. Ways to reduce feelings of stress that I often have.

4. What obstacles did you face during the week that may be causing it to be more difficult to do some of these habits?

5. What questions do you have about reducing feelings of depression and anxiety?

DISCUSSION

With a partner, and then as a class, discuss—to the extent that you are comfortable—the results of this reflection exercise. What went well with it? What do you want to improve on? What questions do you still have?

It is important to note that it may take time to understand the root causes for why we are having feelings of depression and anxiety. Remember, this was just an exercise to attempt some of these changes for a week, but you can continue to improve over time, inshāʾAllāh, and ask Allah ﷻ to help you in every step of the way!

CHAPTER 2

Spiritual Diseases

2.1 Seeking Forgiveness

2.2 Jealousy

2.3 Ghayrah of Religion

2.1 Seeking Forgiveness

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify the meaning of *istighfār* and *tawbah.*
- Analyze some reasons for why despair can deter people from doing *tawbah.*
- Analyze some reasons why pride can deter people from doing *tawbah.*
- Look at various reasons why one should continue to do *tawbah.*
- Explain how we can implement repentance in our own lives.

SEEKING FORGIVENESS

One of the greatest signs of Allah's love and mercy for human beings is that He gave them free will to do as they please. But with this free will also comes the ability to make mistakes and commit sins. Thus, due to His compassion for humanity, He also gave them the means to make up for their mistakes by asking for forgiveness. When a person commits a sin, they harm their own soul. However, this harm can be erased and they can return their soul to its original state of purity by asking Allah ﷻ to forgive them, and turn back to the All-Forgiving Creator. This is a way that human beings are able to purify themselves and reach perfection, continue to fulfill their responsibilities, and try to always do the right thing.

Asking Allah ﷻ to forgive us for our sins and mistakes is called *istighfār*. Making a firm resolution not to commit that sin again and turning back to Him is called *tawbah*. This means that when a person commits a sin, but then decides to repent, they must first do *istighfār* (ask for forgiveness) and then do *tawbah* (turn back to Him). A complete and most sincere change of heart and turning back to Allah ﷻ is called *Tawbatun Naṣūḥ* (sincere and complete repentance) and is mentioned in the Qurʾān as follows:

> "O you who believe, repent to Allah with sincere repentance (Tawbatun Naṣūḥ). Perhaps, your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow…" [1]

DESPAIR AS A BARRIER TO TAWBAH

STOP AND REFLECT: What would you say to a friend who feels like they cannot ask for forgiveness from Allah ﷻ?

Not feeling that we can be forgiven is a sign of despair. One of the greatest sins in Islam is to lose hope in the mercy of Allah ﷻ. This is what Shaytān really wants for us. He wants us to give up on ourselves and to believe that Allah ﷻ cannot help us. If we truly believe in Allah ﷻ and His mercy, then we must also believe that He has the power to forgive us and is All-Merciful. This means that no matter how many times we fall into sin, and no matter how many times we have already asked for forgiveness, we must never stop asking Allah ﷻ to forgive us once more. The only condition is that every time we ask, we must be sincere and intend to never make that same mistake again.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Taḥrīm (66), Verse 8.

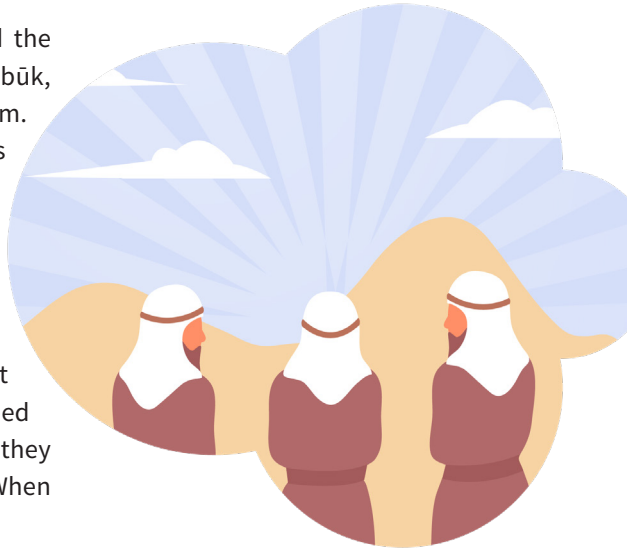
If we do make the mistake again, then it should not be because we intended to, but rather due to heedlessness or negligence; but even if that does happen for some reason, still we should ask for forgiveness again.

In one of the most hope-giving verses of the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says:

"Say [that Allah declares]: 'O My servants who have committed excesses (by sinning) against their own soul, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.'" [2]

Allah ﷻ is too kind and merciful to allow a person to ask Him for help, then turn them away or refuse to forgive them.

If Allah ﷻ did not want to forgive us, then He would not give us the opportunity to ask Him for forgiveness, nor would He inspire our hearts with the desire to repent. So whenever we find an opportunity and willingness to repent sincerely, we should know for a fact that Allah ﷻ will forgive us once more.



In the ninth year after the migration *(Hijrah)*, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ ordered the Muslims in Medina who were capable of joining the army to travel with him to Tabūk, located in northwestern Arabia, in order to fight against the enemies of Islam. During this time, there were some difficult conditions for the Muslims, such as intense heat and the coming of fruit harvesting. There were some men among the Muslims who procrastinated and ultimately decided not to join the expedition. The names of these individuals were: Kaʿb ibn Mālik, Marārah ibn Rabīʿah, and Hilāl ibn Umayyah. When the Prophet ﷺ returned to Medina after the battle, these men felt embarrassed about deserting the army and came to ask about the Prophet's health. However, when they approached the Prophet ﷺ, he did not speak to them out of disapproval. When this happened, the other Muslims stopped speaking to these men as well. Experiencing the cold shoulder from the people, they decided to go up to a mountain and cried to Allah ﷻ, asking Him for forgiveness. When they were eventually forgiven, Allah ﷻ revealed this verse:

"And to the three who were left behind: when the earth became narrow for them in spite of its expanse, and their own souls weighed heavily upon them,[3] *and they knew that there was no refuge from Allah except in Him, then He turned clemently toward them so that they might be penitent. Indeed, Allah is the One who Accepts Repentance, the All-Merciful."* [4]

Being apathetic to the orders of the Prophet ﷺ and deserting the army were major sins. However, despite their treasonous actions, when they turned in sincere repentance to Allah ﷻ, He was All-Forgiving toward them.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah az-Zumar (39), Verse 53.
3 Meaning they were at a complete loss and were overwhelmed by a feeling of guilt.
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah at-Tawbah (9), Verse 118.

Activity 2.1a: Qurʾānic Reflection

DIRECTIONS: Read the following verses, and reflect on what they are saying about people who disdain the worship of Allah ﷻ—in other words, people who are too proud to worship Him. Then, discuss your answers with the class.

"Indeed, those who are [stationed] near your Lord do not disdain (are not prevented by arrogance) to worship Him; and they glorify Him and to Him they prostrate." [8]

"To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth; and those who are near Him do not disdain (are not prevented by arrogance) to worship Him, nor do they become weary." [9]

"And your Lord said: 'Call upon Me, and I will answer you!' Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter Hell in utter humility." [10]

8 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verse 206.
9 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verse 19.
10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ghāfir (40), Verse 60.

Not asking Allah ﷻ for forgiveness can be a sign of pride. Allah ﷻ loves to see His creatures seek forgiveness and blessings from Him. To recognize that Allah ﷻ is our Master and that we are His slaves demonstrates humility and makes us pure and sincere. To refuse to accept that Allah ﷻ is our Creator and Master is a sign of false pride and defiance against surrendering to Him. It is this false pride that sometimes causes people to stop offering their *ṣalāh* and performing their other obligations.

Shayṭān once approached Prophet Mūsā ﷺ and said to him:

> "You are the Prophet of Allah, while I am one of His sinning and disobedient creations. It is my desire that I repent before Him, so request Him to accept my repentance."

Mūsā ﷺ agreed and prayed for him, whereupon Allah said:

> "O Mūsā! I shall accept your intercession on behalf of him. Tell him to prostrate upon Ādam's grave so that I may accept his repentance."

Mūsā ﷺ then met Shayṭān and told him:

> "Prostrate upon Ādam's grave and that will cause your repentance to be accepted."

Hearing this, Shayṭān said:

> "I did not prostrate to Ādam when he was alive, so how can I prostrate upon his grave now that he is dead? I shall never do such a thing!" Then continuing on, he said: "O Mūsā! Since you interceded for me before Allah, you have obliged me. I will advise you to be wary of me in three places in order that you do not face damnation and ruin.
>
> **First:** during anger—for in that state, my soul is in your heart and my eyes are in yours.
>
> **Second:** during a battle *(jihād)*—for in that state, I cause the soldiers to bring their wives, children, and relatives to mind in order that they turn back from the battle and flee away.
>
> **Third:** never sit (alone) with a non-maḥram in one place for I will whisper temptations into both of you." [11]

STOP AND REFLECT: How does what Shayṭān say in the above tradition explain how he brings us down using our own temptations? How can we combat this?

11 Parvar, Ḥājj Shaykh ʿAlī Āqā Saʿādat, *Homāye Saʿādat*, P. 206.

KEEPING AWAY FROM SINS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was once traveling with his followers when he stopped at a desert where there was nothing growing. The Prophet ﷺ asked his followers to go and collect some wood. They replied that it was a desert, and there was only sand around, so it was not possible to find any wood in such a deserted place. The Prophet ﷺ however, insisted that they try to find something.

So off they went, and sure enough when they brought back whatever they could find, it became a huge heap of twigs and wood before the Messenger of Allah's feet. This was then used to light a large fire. The Prophet ﷺ used this as a teaching moment, and told them that sins are like these twigs that we do not notice at first and think they are insignificant. When we look at our lives, we think that there are no major sins we have committed. But it is only by searching our memory carefully that we can recollect our sins—big and small—and need to ask Allah ﷻ to forgive them.[12] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was teaching them the importance and necessity of reflection and self-accounting *(muḥāsabah)*. He was also teaching them not to consider any sin to be small or insignificant, because even small actions—once accumulated—become significant, just as those seemingly insignificant twigs accumulated to a large woodfire.

Is it not better to take regular accounts of ourselves and find all our 'little' sins now while we can still ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness for them, rather than in the grave or on the Day of Judgment when it will be too late? This accounting of our deeds should ideally be done every day at bedtime.

Allah ﷻ assures us that if we commit a sin and then ask for forgiveness, He will most definitely forgive us:

"And those who, when they commit an indecent act or wrong themselves, remember Allah, and seek forgiveness for their sins—and who can forgive sins except Allah? And who knowingly do not persist in [the sins] what they have committed ." [13]

SINCERE REPENTANCE

In order for our repentance to be sincere, we must also undo any harm we have done. For example, if we stole something, asking Allah ﷻ for forgiveness is not enough; we must also return what we stole, or compensate for it if we cannot return that item. If we backbited someone, then we must ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness and also ask the person we have hurt for forgiveness—but if doing so will hurt the relationship, then we should pray for them. If we missed our prayers *(ṣalāh)* or fasts *(sawm)*, then we must make them up (perform the *qaḍāʾ* of them) in addition to asking for forgiveness.

Sometimes we forget to ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness, or we treat some of the sins we commit as 'minor' and therefore continue on with our lives not realizing how we have harmed our souls. A true, faithful believer should therefore try to do some self-accounting *(muḥāsabah)* before going to bed every night. *Muḥāsabah* means 'taking account' of what we did during the day and if we realize that we committed a sin, then we should ask Allah ﷻ for forgiveness immediately. The best time to review our actions, discover any violations we performed in regards to the rights of Allah ﷻ or the rights of others, and seek forgiveness from the Almighty is at the end of the day before we go to sleep. If we do not do this on a regular basis, then we may forget the details of what took place during that day.

Shayṭān also tries to make us delay seeking forgiveness *(istighfār)* and turning back to Allah ﷻ *(tawbah)* by telling us to wait until tomorrow, or Thursday night is the best time to repent, or the month of Ramaḍān is coming, or when we go for *Ḥajj* we can ask for forgiveness, and so on. But of course, no one knows when they will die, and therefore seeking forgiveness and repenting must always be done as soon as possible.

Istighfār and *tawbah* can be simply saying *"astaghfirullāha wa atūbu ilayh"* which means "I seek forgiveness from Allah and turn back to Him," i.e. turn back to His obedience. But it must come after heartfelt regret and a sincere plan never to sin again.

12 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 288.
13 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 135.

TIPS FOR REPENTANCE

1. Reflect Daily:

If we reflect on what we have done on a daily basis, then it will be easier for us to catch our mistakes and realize when we have done wrong and repent for it.

2. Reflect on your Mistakes:

It is recommended by the scholars to spend time reflecting on every mistake we may have made in our lives and ask for forgiveness. Then, we should also seek forgiveness for those mistakes we do not know that we made, or that we may have forgotten about or overlooked.

3. Read Qurʾān:

Reciting the Qurʾān helps soften our hearts so that we are more able to ask for forgiveness.

4. Do Duʿās:

Praying to Allah ﷻ to forgive us regularly is also very important. We should speak to Him in our own words, and regularly recite *duʿās* like Duʿāʾ Kumayl or Duʿāʾ Mashlūl, and various other *duʿās* such as those recommended to be recited after the daily prayers.

5. Be Hopeful:

We must always be hopeful that Allah ﷻ will forgive us. If we sincerely make an effort to stop continuing the mistake, then we should feel that Allah ﷻ has forgiven us, and move on to becoming better gradually over time, with the help of our Creator and Nurturer. Shayṭān wants us to dwell on our mistakes, not seek forgiveness, and think that we will never be forgiven.

6. Forgive Others:

If we want to be forgiven by Allah ﷻ, then it is important for us to forgive others. We should try to reflect if we are upset with anyone and work on forgiving them. One way to do this is to pray for them.

Activity 2.1b: Personal Reflection

DIRECTIONS: Reflect on the following questions for yourself. You do not have to share your answers with anyone.

1. What mistakes do you feel you make repeatedly?

2. How would you like to improve?

3. What steps can you take to work on these mistakes?

4. What is a good time for you to reflect on your day, and self account for your actions?

5. How can you be encouraged to do better, and be hopeful that Allah ﷻ will forgive you?

2.2 Jealousy

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain what jealousy *(ḥasad)* is and when it is prohibited.
- Identify some of the negative spiritual and physical consequences of jealousy.
- Identify some practical ways of being able to overcome and remove jealousy.

ḤASAD: Jealousy in Arabic is called ḥasad, and it is one of the diseases of the soul. It is usually translated as 'jealousy' and sometimes as 'envy.'

DEFINITION OF JEALOUSY

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some of the problems that can come about if you are jealous of others? How can it make a person unhappy?

Jealousy in Arabic is called *ḥasad,* and it is one of the diseases of the soul. It is usually translated as 'jealousy' and sometimes as 'envy.' The precise definition of *ḥasad* from the Islamic sources is a state of heart where:

a) A person is unhappy about what someone else has–whether it is a possession, a status, or some other trait.

b) One wishes for the other person to not have that thing.

An individual who has *ḥasad* (jealousy) is called *ḥāsid* (a jealous person). The target of the jealous person is referred to as *maḥsūd* (the one who the jealous person has jealousy toward).

Ḥasad is a state that is within the heart, and it is natural for somebody to see other people's success and be tempted to feel unhappy about it. However, it is important to identify the boundaries where this feeling becomes impermissible and forbidden *(ḥarām).* Here are some guidelines:

1. When the feeling of unhappiness is sensed, it should be actively combatted (through struggling with the self—*Jīhadun Nafs)*, and if it is not acted upon (meaning that one does not actively do something that is not allowed), then it will not be sinful or forbidden.
2. When the feeling of unhappiness is felt, entertained within, and eventually leads to doing something which is not permissible (like backbiting about the person *(ghībah)*, or plotting to remove that blessing from them, etc.), then it will be sinful and forbidden.
3. When the feeling of unhappiness is felt, entertained within, and no efforts are made to combat it, but it is not acted upon, then it will not be sinful or forbidden. However, it does lead to spiritual consequences, and the internal pollution that is created can easily lead a person to commit sins. Therefore, one must be careful not to let jealousy overcome them.

SERIOUSNESS OF JEALOUSY

Jealousy is a serious disease of the soul.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Look at the translation of Sūrah al-Falaq (Chapter 113). Then answer the following question in the space provided and discuss with your group.

What can we learn about the importance of jealousy from this sūrah?

In Sūrah al-Falaq (113), Verse 5, Allah ﷻ instructs us specifically to seek refuge in Him from the evil of one who has jealousy toward us. This informs us that:

a) Jealousy is a serious danger that we really need to be aware of.

b) We need to actively seek Allah's help to remove it from our souls.

c) We need to constantly pray to Allah ﷻ to protect us from the jealousy of others.

There are various stories in the Qur'ān which talk about people who had jealousy toward others and the outcome of their actions due to this vice. For example, take the story of the two sons of Prophet Ādam ﷺ and see how one of the brothers resorted to killing the other one.[1] Then there is the story of Iblīs who refused to bow down to Prophet Ādam ﷺ;[2] and the harsh treatment that Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ received from his brothers when he was a young child.[3] All of these show how jealousy was a destructive factor that motivated individuals toward sin and rebellion.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ḤASAD AND GHIBṬAH

Ghibṭah is a trait of the soul that is usually translated as 'good envy.' If you see a blessing that someone else has, and you wish to have the same thing for yourself as well (but do not wish evil for the other person), then this feeling is called *'ghibṭah.'* Unlike *ḥasad* which is negative, *ghibṭah* is usually not negative. It would only be negative if what you desire is forbidden or harmful.

GHIBṬAH: a trait of the soul that is usually translated as 'good envy.'

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5), Verses 27-28.
2 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah al-A'rāf (7), Verse 12.
3 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Yūsuf (12), Verses 8-10.

Ghibṭah differs from *ḥasad* in two ways:

1. With *ghibṭah*, you want a blessing that another person has, but you do not wish for it to be taken away from them.
2. *Ghibṭah* is a positive motivating factor to compel you to work hard to attain what you desire, whereas *ḥasad* does not give such motivation.

SIGNS OF JEALOUSY

Jealousy *(ḥasad)* displays itself in different ways. In a tradition reported from Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ, he narrates that Luqmān told his son: *"There are three signs of a person who has jealousy (ḥasad): They backbite the one whom they are jealous of when they are not present; they flatter the one they are jealous of in their presence; and they gloat over the difficulties that befall the one whom they are jealous of."* [4]

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think a person who has jealousy does these things?

The reason they backbite the one whom they are jealous of is because they do not like the blessing that they have been given, and thus they want others to not see that person as being blessed.

They flatter the one whom they are jealous of in their presence because they want to try and hide their true feelings, so they go to the opposite extreme in doing so.

They gloat over the difficulties that the one whom they are jealous of goes through because they are troubled when they are blessed, and are happy when the blessings are removed from them or when they experience some other trials in their life.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF JEALOUSY

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Read the narrations below, and discuss with the person next to you about what stood out to you in these narrations about jealousy. How can jealousy that a person has, have such drastic effects?

1. **Ruin and Wretchedness:** Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"When the rain of jealousy (ḥasad) falls, corruption will grow."* [5]
2. **Uneasiness:** A person who envies is always full of regret, sorrow, and pain, and their sins will be doubled.[6]

4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khisāl*, P. 121.
5 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, P. 290.
6 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil,* Vol. 12, P. 12.

3. **Loss of Faith:** Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ said: *"Jealousy eats away at one's faith (imān) like fire eats away at wood."* [7]

4. **Destroys the Body:** A constant state of worry and unhappiness will affect the body negatively. Imām ʿAli ﷺ said: *"Jealousy melts away the body."* [8]

Jealousy makes a person doubt the Justice of Allah ﷻ and question why He favored the one whom He blessed something with over the person who is feeling jealous. It can eventually even lead an individual to doubt the very existence of Allah ﷻ.

WAYS OF TREATING JEALOUSY

There are certain things that a person can do to try and remove this evil vice from oneself. Below are some suggestions:

1. Strengthening one's understanding of Monotheism (Tawḥīd):

The teachings of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)* tell us that blessings are not dispersed randomly. Rather, Allah ﷻ, the All-Knowing Creator and Nourisher, decides whom to give what to and how much to give. If He gives a blessing to someone else that He does not give to me, and I sense a feeling of jealousy, then I need to remind myself that:

a) Allah ﷻ is All-Aware that I want that blessing, but He is choosing not to give it to me.

b) Allah ﷻ is All-Capable of giving it to me, but He knows better and is choosing not to give it to me.

c) Allah ﷻ is All-Wise and makes His decisions based on ultimate wisdom.

Knowing these things can instill a sense of comfort within us, and enable us to trust in the decisions and decrees of Allah ﷻ. It can also reassure us that if we strive to obtain those blessings through the ways which Allah ﷻ has shown, and if He deems that it is in the best interest of us, then He will give it to us as well.

2. Understanding the negative consequences of jealousy, and coming to terms with their severity:

There are so many negative consequences of jealousy which have mentioned in verses of the Qurʾān and numerous *aḥādīth*, as well as the severe punishments that a person will face due to this sin. Just look at what Iblīs faced due to his jealousy.

3. Pay attention to those who are less fortunate and have been given less, rather than those who have been given more material blessings than us:

Keeping company with those who have been given a lot more than us can easily make us feel jealous. On the contrary, spending time with the oppressed and less fortunate ones can motivate us to show gratitude to Allah ﷻ for what He has given us, and be thankful for that.

4. Do good to those who you may have some feelings of jealousy toward:

Sincerely doing good to the one whom you are jealous of, and displaying love for them is a strong way of combating the internal feelings of jealousy, and unlocking the heart so that it can feel the comfort of Allah's love and mercy.

7 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 75, P. 252.
8 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam,* Vol. 1, P. 54.

Activity 2.2a: Review Questions

1. Look up the Qurʾānic stories referenced in this lesson, and explain the role of jealousy in them.

2. What is the connection between jealousy and Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*?

3. What are some of the signs of jealousy, and what are the negative effects of it?

4. How would you counsel someone who came to you and complained about being jealous of a classmate who always gets better results than them?

2.3 Ghayrah of Religion

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define what *ghayrah* is.
- Examine *ghayrah* with respect to human beings, religion, and one's family members.
- Explore the individual, social, and cultural impact of *ghayrah,* and the lack of it in modern civilization.

Activity 2.3a: Pre-Reading

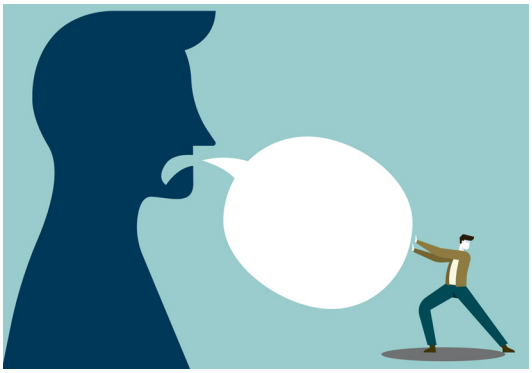
Consider the following scenarios and write down how you might react in each situation. Be prepared to discuss these with the class.

1. Someone makes fun of your face!

2. Someone makes fun of your little brother or sister.

3. Someone shows disrespect toward your parents.

4. A person disrespects your religion.



5. Someone disrespects something or someone you value very much.

Post-Discussion Reflection:

What was the most surprising thing to you about your peers' responses? Did everyone share the same level of concern for each of the things above?

Ghayrah is an Arabic word which can be translated as "having deep care and concern for things that are beloved," and it is one of the highest human virtues which is ingrained in the innate nature *(fiṭrah)* of human beings by Allah ﷻ. It is often misunderstood with jealousy, however, the two are very different in the field of Islamic Ethics.

In the modern world we live in today, unfortunately *ghayrah* is one of the "forgotten and abandoned" virtues. Perhaps this has been influenced by the culture of use-and-replace. Most items we purchase are not meant to last a long time, and unfortunately this is how most relationships are treated as well. For example, relationships with family and friends are meant to grow over a lifetime; and in order for this to happen, we need to handle these interactions with great care and concern so they are preserved. When this care and concern are not present, then relationships break very easily.

We will explore this forgotten and neglected human value and virtue in this lesson in some depth.

GHAYRAH: Having deep care and concern for things that are beloved

Activity 2.3b: Reflection

Consider the narrations below and write down what you think the overall message is. Then answer the subsequent questions:

a) The Noble Prophet ﷺ said: *"Be aware! Allah has prohibited what is prohibited, and has set down certain boundaries. There is no one who has more ghayrah (is more protective and concerned about what is important) than Allah. And from His care and concern, He has prohibited the sins of indecency."* [1]

b) The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"There is no one who has more ghayrah than Allah! That is why He has prohibited the sins of indecency—whether they be apparent or hidden."* [2]

c) Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: *"Allah has ghayrah (deep care and concern, and a desire to protect) with respect to the believers. Therefore, a person who does not have ghayrah should strive to have ghayrah, for indeed one's heart [without ghayrah] is reversed."* [3]

d) Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said: *"Indeed Allah, the Exalted, is extremely concerned, and He loves those who have ghayrah."* [4]

1. What can we learn from these different *aḥādīth*? What is the overall message of all of them?

2. Based on these narrations, what are some things that *ghayrah* applies to?

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 76, P. 332, Ḥadīth #1.
2 Suyūṭiyy, Jalāl ad-Dīn, *Ad-Durr al-Manthur*, Vol. 3, P. 447.
3 Al-Barqī, *Al-Maḥāsin*, Vol. 1, P. 204, Ḥadīth #355.
4 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 5, P. 535, Ḥadīth #1.

1. HUMAN GHAYRAH

Human beings naturally try to defend things that are dear to them and protect them from others. This preservation and defense is the meaning of *ghayrah* with respect to human beings. This quality varies in people according to the type of upbringing, education, taste, environment, etc., that they have experienced; and sometimes it appears in both a positive and negative way. One example of it in a negative way is someone having a type of nationalism that compels a person to defend their country and not allow any foreigners who may want to settle in it. Another example is of people feeling racially motivated where they consider their own race to be superior and harass other ethnic groups and races. These individuals tend to brag about their actions and inflict violence on others for their religious beliefs, or the way they look. We can find specific examples of this in history. The early immigrants of America—instead of learning from the natives—displaced and destroyed their populations. In South Africa, the Apartheid System kept racial segregation laws legal, and stripped people of color even their own basic human rights. In Germany, Jews were widely mistreated by the Nazis due to their religious beliefs.

The Qurʾān gives us an example of how this care and concern can be misplaced:

> "When those who disbelieved entertained in their hearts (a sense of) anger, pride, and arrogance (ḥamiyyah), the pride and arrogance of the Time of Ignorance, then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers [and they prepared themselves for peace], and He made them adhere to righteousness (the truth of consciousness of Allah), and they were well entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah over all things is All-Knowing." [5]

In this verse, *ḥamiyyah* refers to anger, pride, and extreme prejudice. In the events leading to the signing of the Treaty of *Ḥudaybīyyah*, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ, upon the command of the Prophet ﷺ, began the peace treaty with *"Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm"* (In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful). The polytheists, in their anger and prejudice to protect their own culture and tradition said that they do not accept this. The Prophet ﷺ then changed it to *"BismikAllah"* (In the Name of Allah). They also objected to the Prophet ﷺ signing the treaty as: "Messenger of Allah" and demanded that it should be removed. Once again, the Prophet ﷺ accepted this change calmly and removed the title of "Messenger of Allah." This was an example of the bigotry of the idol-worshipers on one hand, and of Allah favoring the Prophet ﷺ and his companions with tranquility on the other hand.

5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Fatḥ (48), Verse 26.

Contrary to this, there are many examples of people who demonstrated *ghayrah* positively, and tried to eliminate oppression and injustice, and dedicated their lives toward this work. They were not concerned only about one particular race of people or country, but rather, they were concerned about all of humanity and establishing human values like justice. Although many of them were not religious, they are commended and admired for doing humanitarian and anti-cruelty works, and dedicating their lives to achieve human goals.

In summary, *ghayrah* with respect to human beings can either be positive or negative. Positive *ghayrah* is essential as it represents a form of protectiveness and loyalty, and this must be nurtured in our communities. For this reason, religion also positively acknowledges it. Negative *ghayrah* on the other hand is considered far from humanity, and Islam draws a line of invalidation on it.

STOP AND REFLECT: What is another positive example of *ghayrah* in relation to human beings? What is an example of negative *ghayrah*?

2. RELIGIOUSLY-MOTIVATED GHAYRAH

Religious *ghayrah* means that a Muslim has special care and concern toward the whole of Islam and what is related to it, and tries with all of one's might and ability to implement it, and prevent the slightest harm and conflict within it. Based on this, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, commanding the truth and patience, teaching and learning, etc., are activities that stem from religious *ghayrah*, because each of these acts strengthen and protect Islam. The perfect examples of this type of *ghayrah* are the final Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ who were all concerned with the establishment of the Divine religion.

In this regard, the Noble Qurʾān, with a provocative tone, tries to arouse the *ghayrah* of Muslims to defend Islam and the helpless Muslims.

> "And why should you not fight in the way of Allah, and (for) the oppressed men, women, and children, who say: 'Our Lord, bring us out of this town whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us from Yourself a guardian, and appoint for us from Yourself a helper?'" [6]

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ rebuked his Kūfan army when the army of Muʿāwiyah marched into Muslim lands and killed and looted Muslim and non-Muslim people as such. The Imām ﷺ said: *"How shocking! By Allah, the cooperation of the enemies in their falsehood, and your lack of commitment despite being on the side of Truth, kills the heart and renews sorrow. Woe be to you [on account of how you lack ghayrah with respect to your religion]... they will rob you, but still you have no honor."* [7]

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ (4), Verse 75.
7 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Vol. 1, P. 69.

The event of ʿĀshūrāʾ is another symbol of religious *ghayrah*. Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ comprehended this genuine truth, and by sacrificing his life in this direction, he tried to revive the religion of Allah ﷻ. In fact, the reason why the Event of Karbalāʾ is so prominent and valuable is because the Imām ﷺ gave up **everything** for the sake of Allah—he sacrificed the lives of his own menfolk, and was willing to bear the captivity of the women in his family. It was because of this religiously-motivated *ghayrah* that the Imām's family was willing to endure captivity, pain, and many sufferings, and even during these intense hardships, Lady Zaynab ﷺ stood up against that tyrant who had no *ghayrah* and boldly said: *"I saw nothing except beauty."* [8]

STOP AND REFLECT: What is another example from history showing how the Prophet ﷺ or his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ represented religiously-motivated *ghayrah?*

3. GHAYRAH WITH RESPECT TO ONE'S FAMILY MEMBERS

Every human being naturally has deep care and concern for one's own family. Sometimes however, this level of care or "honor" can be taken to an extreme level and could even lead to over-protectiveness and suspicion. For example, in some societies, after the death of a husband, his wife also had to be buried with him so that no one else could marry her! In other societies, people conduct "honor killings" by murdering their own family members out of suspicion that they committed an indecent act.

In contrast to them, there are certain individuals who have a complete lack of *ghayrah*, and do not have any care or concern about their family members. For example, parents do not even know who their children's friends are, or where they are going when they go out. Men of the household do not care if their wives or daughters are looked at with lust, and spouses do not care if their relationship boundaries are broken.

The religion of Islam tells its followers to take a balanced approach in everything. In the Event of Karbalāʾ, when Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ was fighting against the enemies, some of them went to attack the Imām's tent, so he said to them: *"I will fight against you, and you can fight against me, but women are not to blame. Stop your misguided ones from going to the tents and do not disturb my family as long as I live!"* [9] This powerful speech was due to the *ghayrah* of the Imām ﷺ—who was angry and protested against the cowardly actions of the enemy army—and emphatically stated that as long as he was alive, he would not tolerate the vicious enemy violating the honor of his family. On the other hand though, during the captivity of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, when Lady Zaynab ﷺ delivered her eloquent speeches in front of large audiences, Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ did not stop her from doing so because he knew that was one of the main ways to keep the message of Islam alive, and to bring about the downfall of the tyrants.

CONCLUSION

Ghayrah is the deep care and concern that we must have for things which are beloved to us. As a result, it is important to understand that what we characterize as beloved will define whether our *ghayrah* manifests positively or negatively. *Ghayrah* is rooted in the healthy growth of human society, in being connected to humanity, and in maintaining basic human rights. It encompasses taking responsibility and ownership, as well as respecting and honoring others. Most importantly, we must understand *ghayrah* as described by Allah ﷻ in the Noble Qurʾān, and as taught by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, instead of being trapped in our own egos and prejudices.

In addition to human society, *ghayrah* is also rooted in our own religion and practices, such as eating *ḥalāl,* supporting others, etc. It is also rooted in relationship dynamics, and maintaining a balanced protectiveness of our family members. Balancing *ghayrah* in our lives can lead to immense tranquility, by the will of Allāh.

8 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 45, P. 114.
9 Ṭabarī, Muḥammad, *Tārikh aṭ-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 5, P. 450.

Activity 2.3c: Review

Consider the same scenarios you were presented with at the beginning of this lesson. After reading this lesson, classify which type of *ghayrah* they fall under, and how we should appropriately react in these situations based on Islamic Ethics.

1. Someone makes fun of your face!

2. Someone makes fun of your little brother or sister.

3. Someone shows disrespect toward your parents.

4. A person disrespects your religion.

5. Someone disrespects something or someone you value very much.

6. Did your answers change drastically at the end of this lesson? What was your biggest takeaway?

CHAPTER 3

Family and Friendships

3.1 Caring for One's Parents

3.2 Social Gatherings

3.1 Caring for One's Parents

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Demonstrate some ways to spend time with our families and help our parents.
- Understand the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in connection to treatment of parents.
- Learn how to build a strong relationship with our parents through the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul Bayt ﷺ.
- Analyze some examples and narrations from the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ in regards to love for our parents.

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think it means to be "good" to our parents?

One of the greatest blessings from Allah ﷻ is the blessing of our families, in particular our parents. Respecting and caring for our parents—not only when we are much older, but even during our teenage years as well—is one of the obligatory actions that is very important for us to carry out. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said that: *"Goodness toward one's parents is the greatest obligatory action."* [1]

As we enter our teenage years, we are entering the third phase of *tarbiyah* (our nurturing and growth). Between the age of 15-21, our own ideas, creativity, and built up energy increase and strengthen because of intellectual and physical growth. It is important that we direct this energy in a positive way as idle minds are breeding grounds for Shayṭān. In this way, we can try to turn our ideas into great things that will positively benefit the world.

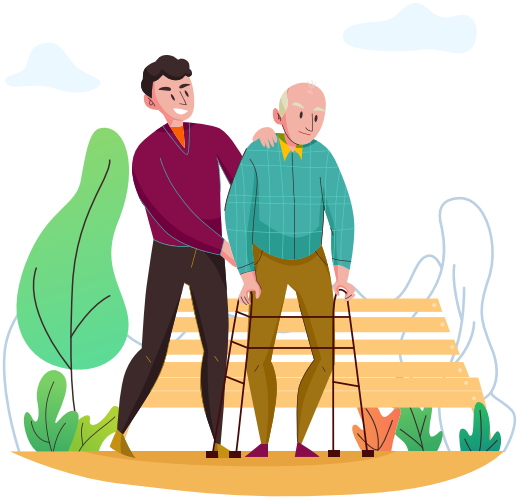
The majority of our time is spent either within our homes or at school (or college or university). We have our own thoughts and ideas about the world, and want to strive to implement these ideas. We want to be able to make our time worthwhile—not only take initiative in our homes and with our parents—but to also use this time to gain closeness to Allah ﷻ. In order to transfer this energy into a positive source, we first need to know **how** to do so.

GROWING UP IN AN ANTAGONISTIC SOCIETY

The Noble Qurʾān speaks about treating our parents with kindness. In many verses, Allah ﷻ speaks about kindness to parents right after speaking about Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*, and the importance of worshiping only One God—Allah ﷻ.

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلاَّ تَعْبُدُواْ إِلاَّ إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِندَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلاَهُمَا فَلاَ تَقُل لَّهُمَآ أُفٍّ وَلاَ تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُل لَّهُمَا قَوْلاً كَرِيمًا

"And your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] kindness to parents. Should any of them, or both (of them) reach old age at your side, do not even say to them [as much as]: 'Ugh!' And do not chide them, but speak to them noble words." [2]



STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think Allah ﷻ speaks about the good treatment of parents right after the concept of Monotheism *(Tawḥīd)*?

1 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mizān al-Ḥikmah*, Vol. 10, P. 709.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 23.

Placing the Unity of Allah ﷻ and Monotheism—which are the most fundamental principles of Islam—alongside being kind and good toward one's parents, is further emphasis laid on this important Islamic principle.

Allah ﷻ gives us clear examples of kindness to our parents, implying that whenever they reach old age, and they will be in need of our constant care, we should not spare them any act of kindness, nor scold them, nor speak to them in any way that may be insulting to them—even to the point of uttering the slightest despising murmuring sound like *'Ugh.'*

Imām ar-Riḍā ﷺ said: *"Allah, the All-Mighty and All-Glorious, has commanded three things with which He has associated three other things. He associated the payment of zakāh along with prayers, such that a person who offers prayers, but desists from offering zakāh, their prayers will be rejected. He associated gratitude to Him with gratitude toward parents, such that the person who is grateful to Allah, but ungrateful to their parents, will be deemed as ungrateful to Allah. He associated righteousness with bonds of kinship, such that the person who is righteous, but has severed relations with their kin, will be deemed as not being righteous."* [3]

In our modern society, particularly in western countries, growing up and being raised is not an easy task, especially for our parents. Many times, our parents sacrifice their own physical comforts for us on a day to day basis, and we do not even realize it, and usually do not appreciate it at all. The financial burden from year to year becomes more difficult with inflation and economic situations constantly changing. Our parents often give up their own ease and comfort for us, so that we do not feel or realize these economic changes, nor are they impacted on us much. It could be something that we view as being small, such as our parents giving us their car to go to university, while they walk or take the bus to work; or give us some extra money for spending, while they themselves are on a strict budget.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Think of ways that you have seen, or witnessed your parents sacrificing their own desires or comforts for you or your siblings. With a partner, discuss these sacrifices. Are any of them similar?

3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 74, P. 77.

Not only the sacrifice of physical comfort, but the spiritual sacrifices living in an antagonistic society also affect our parents a great deal. They take upon unbelievable hardships to raise us according to the teachings of Islam, and plant a small seed of the Roots of Religion *(Uṣul ad-Dīn)* in our hearts. Having to raise children in such a society is extremely difficult as parents are attacked with secular arrows from every angle. The ability to be able to put our children in Islamic schools, whether in-person, online, or weekend schools is a blessing for many parents. Yet despite all these hardships, our parents would do it all over again in a heart-beat since their love for us is very strong. They continually sacrifice their own comfort and ease in order to support our endeavors and spiritual growth, even though sometimes we find them to be a barrier to our own fun and enjoyment.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Make a list of ideas that you can do with your family to help build faith in the household. Fill in the following chart to guide you. When finished, write down other ideas from your classmates that you would like to add to your list.

IDEA	ISLAMIC ASPECT	CAN ALL FAMILY MEMBERS PARTICIPATE? (YES/NO)

BEING A HELPER IN THE HOME

In the Prophetic paradigm, the word *wazīr* is used to define 'a helper.' In the Noble Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ refers to Prophet Harūn ؑ as the *wazīr* of Prophet Musā ؑ. However, a *wazīr* is more than just a helper or an advisor. In Islamic tradition, a *wazīr* has the responsibility of running the government or state, but the final decision making is done by the *sulṭān* or the one in authority. It is in this definition, that we can better understand our roles in this stage of our lives in our homes.

As we were growing up, our parents always guided us and helped us make decisions for ourselves. As children, our parents usually make the decision for us—either without any input from us, or with little input. At this stage in our spiritual training, we become the *wazīr* of our parents. Ultimately, we should be helping to run the show in our homes—in an Islamic manner—for our parents. In this example, we are a *wazīr* (helper) and our parents are the *sulṭān* (the one in authority), while the place or state is our home. Although the *sulṭān* has full authority and the final decision over the state, the *wazīr* has many responsibilities, and controls the state how they believe is best through the guidance of the *sulṭān*.

STOP AND REFLECT: What moral compass and guidance can we use when transitioning into the role of *wazīr* in our homes? Think of a verse of the Noble Qurʾān, or a narration from the Ahlul Bayt ؑ that can help you to remember your role.

Our ideas and energy can be used in this way. If we channel responsibilities to our houses, not only are we implementing our own ideas and thoughts in a positive way, but we are gaining our independence and creating a loving atmosphere within our families. We benefit most because we spend the majority of our time at home with our loved ones.

Abū Wallad al-Hannāt narrates that once he asked Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ about the meaning of the words of Allah ﷻ in the Noble Qurʾān: *"And be good to parents."* The Imām ؑ replied: *"Being good to them means to accompany them in a good manner and never to wait for them to ask you for something they need."*[4] When we become a *wazīr* to our parents, then we are reaching this goal of being good to them; and we are not only fulfilling our responsibilities in the house, but advising and easing the hardships of our parents.

4 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 74, P. 79.

WAYS TO SPEND TIME WITH OUR PARENTS

As we get older, we become more aware of the day to day processes that keep our home and family running. We may not have paid much attention to these previously, and just assumed that they happen automatically. We come to understand that our homes and families are like their own little community—each part working simultaneously; and learning our roles within this system can truly help us understand our parents in the future.

In this regard, we want to help our parents by doing things around the house without having to be asked—in other words, taking initiative. This can be as simple as making sure our room is clean, taking out the garbage, or helping our parents prepare the house and meals for ourselves, or when guests come over. Additionally, it is essential we spend time with our parents in other ways as well, like playing a board game, doing puzzles, watching a movie together, or going out for dinner together. This is due to the fact that if we want to ensure that each part of our homes are working simultaneously, then we need to build a strong bond. Just as we schedule time and outings with our friends, we need to make that effort at home as well, since we are the *wazīr* of our houses.

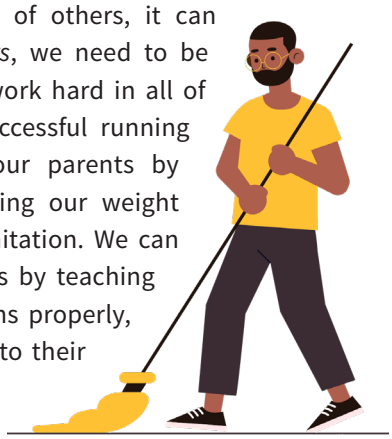
Our home is like our domain or state, and our parents are the *sulṭān*, and we—as the *wazīr*—are responsible for the successful implementation and running of all the different departments. Let us take a look at the different departments.

Department of Engineering

In the Department of Engineering, we help our parents make the blueprints of family traditions and activities. In this way we are a *wazīr* putting on our engineering hats and creating our own family traditions, such as activities and events for Eid, preparing the house for ʿĀshūrāʾ, or serving food during *majālis*. Much like engineers make the foundations of good cars and buildings, we can help our parents make the foundation of family traditions, and help remove some of the burdens from them.

Department of Sanitation

While it may not be fun to do the chores around the house, without the help of others, it can be a daunting task. As *wazīrs*, we need to be able to delegate, as well as work hard in all of the necessary areas for a successful running government. We can help our parents by doing these chores and pulling our weight within the Department of Sanitation. We can also help our younger siblings by teaching them how to clean their rooms properly, or delegate chores according to their own capabilities, such as setting the table or loading the dishwasher, etc.



Department of Religious Services

What is a government without religious services—and who knows best about these services offered, other than the *wazīr*? As the head of the Religious Services Department, you should help the *sulṭān* in initiating prayers together as a family, helping the younger siblings, and reminding them or teaching them how to pray. This is a fundamental department within the state, as many other departments lean on it. Without religious services, the entire state will collapse! It is important to help our parents by making sure that we ourselves are doing our daily prayers punctually, and encouraging other family members as well, so our parents do not have to worry about these things in this department.

Department for Culinary Services

Helping our parents in the kitchen not only teaches us culinary skills that will help us throughout our own lives, but it helps ease some of the stress from our parents. It can be fun thinking of new recipes to try, or making a menu and doing the grocery shopping. It will also be a way to engage with our parents to introduce new ideas and create family fun.

Activity 3.1a: The Wazīr of the Home

Fill in the following graphic organizer to help you develop some ideas in your own home for the position of *wazīr*. What departments will be easy for you? Which ones are more difficult? Add any other departments you think of.

DEPARTMENT	ALREADY DOING	ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION
Culinary Services			
Religious Services			
Sanitation			
Engineering			

Allah ﷻ has emphasized the importance of our parents in the Noble Qurʾān in several places; and the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ have taught us the significance of having love for our families—especially our parents—deep within our hearts. Indeed, by giving our families time, kindness, and help through the sources of light and guidance, we can build better relationships with our parents, our siblings, and other family members, inshāʾAllāh!

We should do whatever we can to help our parents because we know that they genuinely love us a lot, and bear many hardships for our sake. Taking even small steps in this direction will certainly be noticed by them, and more importantly by Allah ﷻ Himself.

Activity 3.1b: Review Questions

1. How can we successfully be the *wazīrs* of our homes?

2. What is the importance Islamically of being good to our parents?

3. List ways that you can help your younger siblings (if you have any) to learn about the importance of starting to help around the house?

4. How do our parents sacrifice for us? Were there any examples from the Think-Pair-Share activity that surprised you?

3.2 Social Gatherings

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Understand the value of social gatherings in light of the teachings of Islam.
- Explain the concept of *'khawḍ'* or plunging into heedlessness that can take place in social gatherings and how the Qurʾān warns us against this.
- Recognize the importance of setting limits, and our responsibilities when those limits are crossed.
- Building confidence about knowing when to say no.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

- What is the connection between Islam and parties?
- Is Islam just about what we should or should not do?
- What does Islam say about:
  a. How we should party.
  b. When we should go to a particular party.
  c. Why should we party?

PARTIES IN ISLAM

Hosting social gatherings or going to such gatherings can be part of social experiences that Islam encourages, which can help us with the rest of our lives (including various aspects of worship). In previous lessons, we talked about how entertainment can serve a purpose of getting us closer to Allah ﷻ—when we do it with the right intention, with balance, and paying attention to the guidelines set by the Almighty. Similarly, Islam encourages certain occasions for us to be joyous (like Eid, birthdates of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, Fridays, etc.)—not just for the sake of being festive, but rather because these are times when someone can celebrate by turning to Allah ﷻ and seeking His forgiveness. Islam teaches us to connect **everything** to Allah ﷻ, thus, even parties should be done while keeping in mind our responsibilities toward Him.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

1. What is the last party or social gathering you attended?
   a. What was fun about it?
   b. What was not fun about it?
   c. What was Islamic about it?
   d. Was there anything non-Islamic about it?

Activity 3.2a: Jigsaw!

Each student will receive one *ḥadīth* to read and reflect on for 5 minutes.

1. **5 minutes:** Read your *ḥadīth,* and write down one or two points of reflection, and one question that arises for you.

2. **3 minutes:** Find all the other students in your class with the same *ḥadīth* - this is now your expert group! Once you are in your group, each student will have a separate role: Discussion leader, recorder (to take notes), researcher (goes through everyone's notes and summarizes them), and a presenter.

3. **15 minutes:** With your expert group, reread the *ḥadīth* and discuss ideas, thoughts, and questions. As a group, come up with three key points the presenter can share with the class in order to teach them about your *ḥadīth*.

Ḥadīth 1:

Allah ﷻ says in a *Ḥadīth Qudsī:*[1] *"When a Muslim visits another Muslim, it is not that person whom they visit, but rather they visit Me—and their reward is Paradise."*[2]

Ḥadīth 2:

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ؑ said to his companions: *"Be brothers (or sisters) to one another—do good to each other, be loving for the sake of Allah, keep up ties, show mercy, visit and meet one another, and remember our affairs and enliven them."*[3]

1 *Ḥadīth Qudsī* is a narration which is actually from Allah ﷻ in its meanings, but from Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in its wordings.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 56, P. 188.
3 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 12, P. 22.

Ḥadīth 3:

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ said: *"Whenever a group of people gather together, but they do not remember Allah, nor do they send blessings on the Prophet and his family, then that gathering will be a source of regret for them on the Day of Judgment."* [4]

Ḥadīth 4:

The Noble Prophet ﷺ said: *"A group of people is a source of blessings in which food for one person will suffice for two, and food for two people will suffice for four."* [5]

After hearing each of these *ḥadīth*, explain in your own words why you think it is important to gather with other people?

4 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 7, P. 198.
5 Muḥaddith Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, Vol. 16, P. 231; Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 6, P. 273.

BEING BALANCED

STOP AND REFLECT: In some gatherings, you might have experienced that the host does not provide food or other forms of hospitality, in a sufficient manner. In other gatherings, the opposite may be true where the host goes overboard. What is the perfect balance?

Although it is very good and highly recommended to invite people and serve others, the host should not stretch themselves beyond what they can afford (in terms of time/resources/energy). They also should not have to do so many preparations or engage in so much work such that they neglect their own primary responsibilities. For example, if someone hosts gatherings very often, they might not have time for their own family; or they may end up being too tired after the programs to give proper attention to their household.

DISCOURAGED AND PROHIBITED GATHERINGS

Allah ﷻ says in the Qurʾān: *"And when you see those who engage in (offensive) discourse about Our signs, avoid them until they enter into some other discourse; but if Satan makes you forget, then after remembering, do not sit with the wrongdoing people."* [6]

He also says:

> "Certainly He has sent down to you in the Book that when you hear the signs of Allah being rejected and ridiculed, do not sit with them until they engage in some other discourse, or else you [too] will be like them. Indeed, Allah will gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers in Hell all together." [7]

The first verse forbids Muslims from participating in gatherings of sinfulness. This prohibition ranges from what is forbidden *(ḥarām*—like a gathering in which alcohol is being served; or a gathering in which a sin, such as inappropriate mixing, is being encouraged on a wide scale level), to what is better to avoid *(makrūh*—like a gathering in which someone would suffer on a spiritual level due to the type of conversation or the people who have gathered).

The second verse was sent as a reminder to those people who forgot about the first verse. This shows us that it is not easy to disengage from social gatherings!

The word used for people who are deeply engaged in sinful discussions is *"khawḍ"* (خوض). The word literally means 'to dive deep into something.' In the Qurʾān, it is used to describe diving deep into sins or matters which are pointless, and do not lead to any useful outcomes.

KHAWḌ (خوض):
The word literally means to dive deep into something.

GHAWṢ (غوص):
This is similar to khawḍ, because it too means to dive into something, but there is an important difference. Ghawṣ can be to dive into something which is good or something which is evil.

6 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 68.
7 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nisāʾ(4), Verse 140.

Arabic is a very rich language. *"Ghawṣ"* (غوص) is similar to *"khawḍ"* (خوض) because it also means 'to dive into something,' but there is an important difference. *Ghawṣ* means 'to dive into something which is good or something which is evil.' This analogy gives us a beautiful way to think of conversations and gatherings. When we sit with others and talk, we can lose ourselves in a certain topic. If it is something good, then we are like divers who are seeking pearls from the bottom of a sea. But if it is something evil, God forbid, then it can be like someone who is covered with a wave and is drowning in the depths of the sea. In social gatherings, we should try to be like a diver who is looking for pearls *(ghawṣ),* rather than losing ourselves *(khawḍ).*

STOP AND REFLECT: What type of deep discussions lead to fruitful outcomes? What can happen if you speak too long on a topic that is not fruitful? How do you feel afterward?

Some of the criteria we should be cautious about so that we can engage in a fruitful gathering:

- The discussion that takes place should be centered around logic, evidence, and truth.
- The discussion should involve learning more about the person you are talking to in a way that helps you connect with them better, or understand how to assist or help them if necessary.
- The people who are talking should be qualified to speak on the matter, and/or clearly state the difference between facts and their own opinions.
- The matter being discussed is worth listening to, because knowing the result of it can actually help us become better (we can then act on the knowledge gained).
- When the discussion is limited, and does not drag on beyond necessary.

STOP AND REFLECT: Do we always have to say 'yes' when we are invited to a gathering? What criteria should we use when deciding whether to go to a gathering, or not attend it and excuse ourselves?

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"To those who are present and those who are absent from my nation! I enjoin upon you to accept the invitation of your Muslim brother (or sister), even if they live a distance of five miles away![8] This act is part of your faith (īmān)."*[9]

He is also reported to have said: *"If someone invites one's Muslim brother (or sister) to a meal and they do not accept (the invitation), then they have treated them unjustly."*[10]

8 Of course, this does not mean a literal five miles, as nowadays that is hardly even much of a distance, but it means even if you have to travel a long way to accept their invitation, then do so if you are able to.

9 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 6, P. 274.

10 *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, Vol. 20, P. 119.

STOP AND REFLECT: These traditions show us that accepting an invitation from a fellow Muslim is very important in Islam. It is considered an act of Islamic siblinghood. Why do you think that is?

The masjid is a great place for community gatherings, but there is a special type of interaction that can only happen inside of homes. When we invite people to our homes, the relationship becomes more like a family relationship than a formal relationship. The Qurʾān tells us that believers are brethren to one another. If someone refuses to go to another person's home, it can create tension or strain between the people. This will reflect negatively on the entire community. Inviting one another to our homes can be a way of sharing the blessings that Allah ﷻ has given to individuals. Accepting an invitation is a way of helping the host receive the great rewards for inviting others.

These traditions teach us a general principle: Accepting the invitation of well-intentioned people, especially believers in faith, is commendable.

However, we must also recognize that not every invitation is worth going to. Certain invitations (like gatherings of sin, or where there is fear that one's faith will be weakened) would be forbidden to accept or attend. Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ is reported to have said: *"It is not befitting for believers to take part in gatherings where sins will be committed and they do not have the ability to prevent those sins from occurring."* [11]

He also said: *"Whenever three or more believers gather together, the same number of angels also join that gathering. If they pray for goodness, then the angels will say: 'āmīn (please accept this).' If they seek Allah's protection from evil, then the angels will pray that Allah swerves the evil away from them. However, if three of the stubborn enemies of the Ahlul Bayt gather together, then a tenfold amount of devils will join them in that gathering. If they speak, then the devils will also speak in their manner. If they laugh, then the devils will join them in their laughter. If they curse the Imāms, then the devils will curse them as well. If any of you are tried with their company, and they begin discussing such things, then stand up (and leave that gathering) and do not be a partner to the devil, nor their sitting companions; but if you are not able to leave, then at least deny what they say in your heart, and leave as soon as you can."* [12]

11 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 374.
12 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 187.

WEDDINGS

STOP AND REFLECT: What are some common wedding practices which occur, but are forbidden *(ḥarām)*?

When people organize weddings, they often prefer cultural practices over religious practices. For example, they may have a mixed gathering where there is no separation between the men and women, or play forbidden *(ḥarām)* music, or dance in a gathering where there is no segregation between the genders, or forgo *ḥijāb* in front of non-*maḥrams* even if they typically wear proper *ḥijāb*. These practices are traps of Shayṭan. However, as a way of being grateful to Allah ﷻ and seeking His continued blessings, we should instead be even more careful about not sinning, especially during a sanctified time like a wedding.

There are often significant pressures from families and friends to attend wedding gatherings, even if they may incorporate something outright forbidden *(ḥarām)*. Being God-conscious in such times can be very difficult, and people often attend just because they feel like they cannot refuse, or are afraid of upsetting the person who invited them. We have to try hard to maintain good ties with other people, however, those relations should not prevent us from performing our necessary obligations and duties to Allah ﷻ.

Some strategies to implement in these difficult situations, and still maintain family relations might include:

- Ask about the environment of the party beforehand to ensure that there will be nothing forbidden taking place.
- If you know that part of the function will entail something which is not permissible, then go such that you avoid that thing (so for example, either go earlier, then excuse yourself; or go later after the forbidden thing has finished).
- Decline going to the actual invitation, but then later on invite the relative to your home after the event.
- Do not attend that particular event, but visit the relative before or after to drop off a gift.

It is also our responsibility to ensure that all of these methods are done in a discreet manner so as to not offend the other party or insult them. We can try to advise them if we think that it will be beneficial or have a positive effect.

FAMILY GATHERINGS

Sometimes it is difficult to get away from the obligations of family gatherings. For example, you may have a family member who holds mixed gatherings where everyone is dressed in fancy clothes, *ḥijāb* is not properly observed, and there is an abundance of food and vain talk. If the gathering does not entail *ḥarām*, then you may have to attend for the sake of keeping ties with your family members; however, you can try to navigate the conversation, make sure you are appropriately dressed, and observe the rules of *ḥijāb* especially when it comes to your interactions with others. If your own family members are supportive, then you can also try to attend for a minimal amount of time.

GATHERINGS WITH OUR PEERS

When it comes to gatherings with our peers, it can be difficult to deal with different situations out of fear of being judged, or not being sure about what to do. It is important to remember that at this age, we are only in school or amongst certain friends for a short period of time. If we are having a difficult time at a gathering, then we should feel okay to go home or call our parents. What other people think about us in such circumstances does not really matter; and while they may seem important right now, they are unlikely to be a significant part of our lives in a few years. If we only care about what Allah ﷻ thinks, then He will help us out and reward us accordingly, inshāʿAllāh.

Activity 3.2b: Scenarios

Consider the following scenarios, and how you might respond in each situation using what we have learned about the importance of gatherings and setting limits to maintain a permissible *(ḥalāl)* atmosphere.

1. You receive an invitation to a wedding where you know there will be forbidden (*ḥarām*) music playing.

   a. Suppose you wanted to take a strategy of educating the host about the importance of keeping a pure environment. How can you convey this to them?

   b. If they still insist on playing the forbidden music, what will be your next step?

2. You are invited to your cousin's birthday party. You know that this will be a mixed gathering, and although the food will be *ḥalāl*, it will be an atmosphere with a lot of vain talk and gossip. You are not enthused about going, but know that your family will be offended if you do not attend. What can you do?

3. Your friend from school is having a get together to celebrate the end of the year. You know that they will serve *ḥarām* food, and there will be dancing. How can you kindly decline your friend's invitation while also maintaining your friendship?

STOP AND REFLECT: Have you ever had to say "no" to a certain invitation because of the principles of your faith? Or did you ever have to leave a gathering early because you realized that it was not good for you to stay? Why is it sometimes difficult to say no, or uphold your principles?

Key Takeaway:

Sometimes, we might need to get away from our comfort zone in order to keep good relationships with others. But, we should never compromise our core values. There are times when we will have to say no, or leave early, knowing that the other person may feel bad, but confident that Allah ﷻ will be pleased with our actions.

Activity 3.2c: Design an Ideal Social Gathering

Complete the steps below to design an ideal permissible *(ḥalāl)* gathering. When designing it, take into account what we have discussed in this lesson. The objective is to design it in line with Islamic goals and values, while also making it an enjoyable gathering. The rubric at the end can be used as a guideline.

Step 1: Complete the worksheet below, identifying the purpose behind the event, along with the ideal guest list criteria, menu, and entertainment.

- Purpose/Reason for the Gathering:

- Guest List:

- Menu:

- Entertainment:

Step 2: Create a layout/sketch of how you imagine your party set up will be. Be sure to take into consideration how the guests will be seated, especially if it is a gathering for both genders.

Step 3: Lastly, create a digital or print invite for your gathering. Be aware of how you will 'advertise' it to your guests.

Grading Rubric

	1 INEFFECTIVE	2 SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 CONSIDERABLY EFFECTIVE	4 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
Grammar	There were 5 or more grammatical mistakes.	There were 3-5 grammatical mistakes.	There were 1-2 grammatical mistakes.	There were no grammatical mistakes in the project.
Islamic Principles/ Accuracy	Content did not meet the Islamic Principles.	Content met the Islamic Principles, however there was a lack of accuracy in item description.	Content presented met almost all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.	Content presented met all of the Islamic Principles mentioned above, while maintaining accuracy of item description.
Creativity	Project was distractingly messy, and/or lacked design.	Project was presented somewhat creatively, but left the audience wanting more in design and neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging manner, but lacked neatness.	Project was presented in an engaging and catchy way in terms of design, neatness, and layout.
Quality	Materials presented were not convincing or compelling.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose and lack quality.	Materials presented did not serve the intended purpose, but still demonstrated quality work.	Materials presented were extremely compelling and convincing.

CHAPTER 4

Relationships and Etiquettes

4.1 From Adolescence to Adulthood

4.2 Benefits of Community Service

4.3 Recreation

4.1 From Adolescence to Adulthood

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify how to smoothly transition from adolescence to adulthood.
- Identify the standards of adulthood in Islam, and the main character traits of a mature Muslim.
- Explain the repercussions of the age of religious responsibility *(taklīf)*.
- Compare the expectations of childhood with the traits of maturity in Islam.
- Identify elements regarding youth in the Qurʾān.

Activity 4.1a: Adolescence vs. Adulthood

Create a T-chart comparing and contrasting traits of adolescence/teenage years with traits of adulthood.

TRAITS OF ADOLESCENCE	TRAITS OF ADULTHOOD

Once you are finished, write one trait on the board under "Adolescence," and one trait on the board under "Adulthood."

Discuss the traits, and explain why you wrote the traits you did, or explain why you agree with a certain trait on the board.

YOUTH IN ISLAM

STOP AND REFLECT: Who are some examples in history of youth or children who helped the religion of Islam?

In the history of Islam until the contemporary era, there have been many examples of youth who were firm believers of Allah ﷻ and His very close servants. These examples include the martyrs of Karbalāʾ, such as Qāsim and ʿAbdullāh, the young sons of Imām Ḥasan ؑ; and ʿAwn and Muḥammad, the sons of Lady Zaynab ؑ. They also include young female supporters of the Imāms ؑ, such as Lady Fāṭimah Maʿṣūmah ؑ, the daughter of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ؑ, who attained a great level of knowledge despite her young age, and passed away on her journey from Medina to Khorasān which she undertook in order to be with her brother, Imām ar-Riḍā ؑ. These stories move us deeply because at such a young age, these youth knew the Imām ؑ of their time and fulfilled their responsibilities toward him.

In current times, there is a push to try to keep young people irresponsible and immature. For example, in many countries, youth are encouraged to be in school for a very long time before settling down or trying to get married. People want to stay "young" for as long as possible in order to try to keep from having their "freedom" taken away. In Islam however, it is obligatory *(wājib)* for us to perform our responsibilities, from the time we reach the age of maturity *(bulūgh)*. We must perform all of the compulsory actions *(wājibāt),* and stay away from all of the forbidden things *(muḥarrimāt),* and fulfill our responsibilities toward our families and communities. In addition to these things, acting upon all our duties will also help us develop character and give our lives stability and purpose.

In this lesson, we will talk more about the characteristics of young adults, and what Allah ﷻ expects from them at this age.

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG ADULTS

We will now look at some important characteristics of young adults.

Activity 4.1b: Qurʾānic Reflection

Read the following examples of youth in the Qurʾān, and share with a partner how such youth acted.

1. Ibrāhīm is described as young in the Qurʾān when he spoke up against idol-worshiping:

قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ

"They said: 'We heard a young man mentioning them. He is called 'Ibrāhīm.'" [1]

Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ returned from living alone in a cave for many years. He came to know His Lord, who was the One who protected him since he was an infant. When his uncle brought Ibrāhīm ﷺ to the temple, he knew that the idols which the people were worshiping were not God. He then questioned them about this, and at that time, he was only about thirteen years old.

2. Ibrāhīm's young son, Ismāʿīl ﷺ, illustrated firm faith and contentment with Allah's will:

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ۚ قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّـهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"When he (Ismāʿīl) was old enough to assist in his endeavor, he (Ibrāhīm) said (to him): 'O my son, I see in (my) dream that I am sacrificing you. What do you think (about this)?' He (Ismāʿīl) replied: 'O my father, do whatever you have been commanded to do. If Allah wishes, you will find me to be from the patient ones.'" [2]

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verse 60.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah aṣ-Ṣāffāt (37), Verse 102.

In this story, Prophet Ismāʿīl ﷺ did not so much as even hesitate when he was asked by his father for his opinion. Even at a young age, he fully understood who his father was, and who Allah ﷻ was, and he knew that Allah ﷻ possessed great wisdom, whereas humans did not. Prophet Ismāʿīl ﷺ only requested from his father that: *"I only ask you to bind my limbs so that I do not move; and tie your clothes back so they are not sprayed with my blood, lest my mother sees that; and sharpen your blade; and move it swiftly across my throat to make it easier on me, for indeed death is difficult."* [3]

3. The young men of the cave (kahf) were youth who demonstrated pure faith:

إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

"When the youths took refuge in the cave, they said: 'Our Lord! Grant us a mercy from Yourself, and help us to rectify our affairs (in the) right way.'" [4]

In the story of Sūrah al-Kahf (Chapter 18), the youths who went into the cave were used as an example of the miracle of Allah ﷻ. In the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ says: *"We relate to you their account in truth. They were indeed youths who had faith in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance, and fortified their hearts, when they stood up and said: 'Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We will never invoke any deity besides Him, for then surely we would have said an atrocious lie.'"* [5]

3 Arastu, Rizwan, *God's Emissaries: Adam to Jesus.*
4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verse 10.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Kahf (18), Verses 13-14.

Now we will look at some examples from the narrations *(aḥādīth)* regarding desirable traits of young people from an Islamic Perspective.

LEARNING

مَن تَعَلَّمَ في شَبابِهِ كانَ بِمَنزِلَةِ الرَّسمِ في الحَجَرِ، ومَن تَعَلَّمَ وهُو كبيرٌ كانَ بِمَنزِلَةِ الكِتابِ على وَجهِ الماءِ

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Learning something during one's youth is like engraving it on stone; whereas learning something when one is old is like writing on the surface of water." [6]

OBEDIENCE

إنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الشابَّ الذي يُفني شَبابَهُ في طاعَةِ اللّٰهِ تعالى

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, Allah loves a young person who spends their entire youth in the obedience of Allah, the All-High." [7]

REPENTANCE

إنَّ اللّٰهَ تعالى يُحِبُّ الشابَّ التائبَ

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Verily, Allah, the All-High, loves a penitent youth (one who repents)." [8]

Note: Compared to the previous *ḥadīth* where Allah ﷻ loves someone who is in total obedience to Him, this *ḥadīth* says that even if you make a mistake, Allah ﷻ loves those who are penitent—those who repent with remorse for their mistakes, and turn back to Him seeking forgiveness.

6 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 1, P. 222.
7 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mizān al-Ḥikmah,* Ḥadīth # 9097.
8 Muttaqī Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl,* Ḥadīth # 10185.

CONCLUSION

Activity 4.1c: Islamic Maturity

Below are excerpts from leading scholars of our times who focus on the general responsibilities of maturity *(bulūgh).*

Excerpt 1

Read the following excerpt from the late Āyatullāh Sayyid al-Ḥakīm's writings on maturity, then discuss with your partner the questions below:

> *Excerpt: When a boy or girl reaches the age of legal maturity, the stage of childhood ends, and they must comply with the laws of Islam. Thus, they must perform all the obligatory actions and refrain from all the prohibited things. Their judgment becomes like that of an adult such that Allah ﷻ will take them to account for their deeds, show gratitude to them for their obedience, and write for them a great deal of rewards for them for the Day of Judgment. In addition, they should perform some recommended acts in order to increase their rewards, like helping the poor, visiting masājid, going to the Shrines of the Prophet ﷺ and the Imāms ؑ, supplicating, reciting the Qurʾān, and performing some of the recommended prayers. If they do not know about these acts, then they should ask others so that they do not miss out on the opportunity to earn the rewards for these great deeds. Over and above all of this, they must rely on Allah ﷻ and seek His help in their affairs, for He is the All-High, and is the best Master and the best Helper.*[9]

1. How does his description of maturity differ from the way we usually treat young adults in our current day society and Islamic communities? Is there a difference, or do you think there is no difference?

2. If young adults have the responsibilities that he describes in the religious spheres of life, should we expect them to have similarly heavy responsibilities in other areas of life like school, family, community, social justice, etc? Or is this limited to only religious duties?

3. If so, or if not, please explain your thoughts with at least two examples with arguments for each.

9 Āyatullāh Sayyid al-Ḥakīm, *Lessons in Islamic Laws*, P.15.

Excerpt 2

Read the following excerpt from the advice of Āyatullāh Sistani regarding the youth, then answer the questions that follow:

> *Excerpt: I advise the youth to strive toward doing good, helping others, and striving for the common good—especially when it comes to the affairs of orphans, widows, and those in need. This will help strengthen faith, train the self, and give back the many blessings that have been received. It is a subtle way that can promote a virtuous society, cooperation among people, enjoining good, and forbidding evil; and it can also help the guardians of society preserve public order and promote the common good. It also helps uplift and advance society. Doing good will bring blessings to one's life in this world and a great reward in the next. Allah loves a society in which individuals care about each other, wish good for one another, and are concerned about the pains and problems of other people.*
>
> *Allah ﷻ says in the Noble Qurʾān: "And if only the people of the towns had believed (in Our revelations) and maintained God-consciousness, We would have certainly showered upon them Our blessings from the sky and the earth. But they called Our revelations lies, thus Our torment struck them for their evil deeds."* [10]
>
> *In another verse, Allah ﷻ says: "Everyone is guarded and protected on all sides by the order of Allah. Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a nation unless they change what is within themselves. And when Allah intends to punish a people, there is no way to escape from it; and no one besides Allah will protect them from it."* [11]
>
> *In addition, it has been narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "A person is not a believer until they want for their brother [or sister] what they want for themselves, and hate for their brother [or sister] what they hate for themselves."* [12]
>
> *Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ also said: "Whoever plants a good deed (and is a role model for it), will be rewarded for doing that (good) deed and they will be rewarded for everyone who [follows them] and does that (good) deed."* [13]

1. Pick one *ḥadīth* or quote from his words that stood out for you, and reflect on what it is saying.

   a. Why did the *ḥadīth* or quote stand out for you? What is it saying?

   b. Explain what steps we can take to implement this in our lives.

10 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aʿrāf (7), Verse 96.
11 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ar-Raʿd (13), Verse 11.
12 100 Pearls: Advice from Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī al-Sistani.
13 100 Pearls: Advice from Āyatullāh Sayyid ʿAlī al-Sistani.

2. Write down what you have learned about Islam's understanding of maturity and youth; and what changes you think you could make in the following aspects of your life:

   a. Relationships with others, such as your family and friends.

   b. Giving back to the community.

   c. Daily worship, such as implementing some duʿās or extra prayers.

   d. In your daily schedule to make it more productive.

4.2 Benefits of Community Service

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Identify the meaning of community service in an Islamic context.
- Compare true charity with charity done for show.
- Create a hypothetical charity that embodies the true meaning of community service.

In this lesson, we will take a closer look at community service.

Let us begin with a case study from 2015:

> *"TOMS is a shoe company that markets itself like a charity: When you buy TOMS products, the company makes an in-kind donation to a person in need. When someone buys a pair of TOMS shoes in the US, for instance, the company donates a pair of shoes to a child in a poor country like Haiti. When TOMS worked with an outside research team to evaluate the impact of its shoe donations, the researchers were unable to find a way in which the shoes had much of a substantive impact on the lives of poor kids. The kids liked the shoes, and used them to play outside a little more often; but there was no significant improvement in their school attendance or self-esteem."*[1]

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Why do you think TOMS marketed itself in this way? Why do you think TOMS has now changed its focus to "invest ⅓ of our profits in grassroots efforts, like organizations creating change at the local level, and driving progress from the ground up?"[2]

This example shows us that not all efforts to help others actually make a significant difference. We can also see that just because an effort is marketed as a way of serving others, it could actually be a way of serving the person or company who is organizing that effort. In fact, people may have been more likely to buy TOMS after seeing their one-for-one charity promotion; however, the results do not reflect true charity.

We often see something similar on social media, where people post that they are doing charity work just to show that they are doing something good.

STOP AND REFLECT: Can you think of examples of community service that actually serve the interests of the people involved more than the people whom they are trying to help (or supposedly benefiting)?

Allah ﷻ has given us many blessings and talents, and He expects that we will use our bounties to help those who are not that fortunate—some of whom may not even possess the bare necessities.

1 Excerpt from https://www.vox.com/2015/7/23/9025975/toms-shoes-poverty-giving.
2 https://www.toms.com/us/impact.html (last accessed December, 2021).

Islam has emphasized this aspect of the social lives of Muslims. There are tremendous rewards and benefits for participating, supporting, and promoting service to our fellow human beings. Let us now take a closer look at some of the Islamic teachings regarding community service and its importance.

COMMUNITY SERVICE IS A SOURCE OF BLESSINGS

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said:

> "The best of people are the ones who are the most beneficial to other people." [3]

The benefit of helping others is immense. It not only increases our own sustenance and providence in this world, but it has tremendous benefits in the Hereafter as well. One of the companions of Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ was accompanying the Imām ﷺ during *Ḥajj*, and the Imām ﷺ was explaining to this man the rewards of each act of *Ḥajj*. The companion was amazed by this and wondered at the great rewards of each action. The Imām ﷺ then asked him: *"Do you want me to teach you something that brings even greater rewards?"* The companion was startled: *"Is there such an act?"* The Imām ﷺ replied: *"Yes, fulfilling the need of a believer is better than a Ḥajj, and a Ḥajj, and a Ḥajj…"* he counted in this way until he reached ten *Ḥajj* pilgrimages.[4]

DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

STOP AND REFLECT: Is giving money the only way that one can do charity? What are some other ways to engage in charity?

When we think of charity, we often think that it only means giving money. Sometimes, we might even hesitate about donating money to a charity because as young people we usually do not have much money. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Do not feel ashamed if the amount of charity that you give is small, because to refuse (to give anything to) the needy is an act of greater shame."* [5]

There are also many other ways that a person can benefit others and give in charity without donating any money at all. For example, when we smile at another person, or move a branch out of a path so that others can walk, or help someone cross the road, etc., we are doing small acts of charity. We can spend time teaching others, helping them with their homework, or giving someone emotional support that they may need—these, and many other such acts, are all various forms of charity.

COMMUNITY SERVICE IS A FORM OF WORSHIP

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq ﷺ once said: *"By Allah, Allah has not been worshiped by anything better than fulfilling the rights of a believer. Surely, a believer has a greater right than (even) the Kaʿbah."* [6]

This narration clearly shows that one of the best ways of worshiping Allah ﷻ is by serving His creations and fulfilling the rights they have upon us. The important point to remember here is that helping others should be done purely for the sake of the Almighty ﷻ—not to gain any fame, be liked by others, or to become popular. As we mentioned before, this form of worshiping has far more rewards than even the performance of *Ḥajj*, or any other form of the ritual prayers!

The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: *"A person who helps one's Muslim brother (or sister) to fulfill a need they have, it is as if they worshiped Allah for nine thousand years in which they stood on their feet during the night, and fasted during the day."* [7]

3 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar* al-*Ḥikam*, Ḥadīth #10300.
4 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, P. 582.
5 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Short Saying #67.
6 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 74, P. 222.
7 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 74, P. 316.

One narration from Imām as-Sajjād ﷺ beautifully captures the rewards of helping others. The 4th Imām ﷺ says: *"A person one who fulfills the need of another believer has begun by fulfilling the need of Allah, and because of it, Allah will fulfill one hundred of their needs—one of these needs being Paradise. A person who relieves the sorrow of someone else, Allah will relieve the sorrows of the Hereafter from them. If a person visits an ill person, then the angels will surround them and pray for them until they leave [from the side of the sick person]. The angels will say: 'May Paradise be for you purely.' By Allah, meeting the needs of a believer is more beloved to Allah than fasting for two consecutive months while performing I'tikāf [8] in Masjid al-Ḥarām."* [9]

COMMUNITY SERVICE IS A SOCIAL OBLIGATION

We often judge religiousness by ritualistic things like prayers, fasting, and *Ḥajj*. However, often these things are not so difficult to perform, as the only barrier between us and prayer, for example, is laziness. However, social obligations can often be the true test of our faith.

When a person comes to us with a certain need, then the sign of true faith is to help that person in the best way we can.

This is a major obligation in Islam, and is one of the criteria by which the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ measure their followers.

A man once came to Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ and praised the people of his village excessively. The Imām ﷺ asked him: *"(In your village), do the rich visit the poor when they are sick or needy?"* The man replied: *"Not often."* The Imām ﷺ asked: *"Do the rich care for the poor?"* The man answered: *"Not really."* The Imām ﷺ questioned him: *"Do the wealthy share their wealth with the needy?"* The man replied: *"You have mentioned traits that we do not possess."* The Imām ﷺ then said: *"How can you claim that these people are Shīʿah?"* [10]

In a similar tradition, a man was proud to come from a town with a large population of Shīʿahs. Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ asked him: *"Are the rich compassionate toward the poor? Do the righteous forgive the evil? Do people take care of each other's needs?"* When the man said no, the Imām ﷺ replied: *"Then they are not our Shīʿah—for the Shīʿah are those who do these things."* [11]

8 This is an act of worship where a believer stays in a masjid for three consecutive days, and has to fulfill certain duties.
9 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Thawāb* al-*Aʿmāl*, Pp. 175-176.
10 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 173.
11 *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 173.

These narrations emphasise how we should be extremely diligent in meeting the needs of our community members. In fact, the Imāms ﷺ stressed upon these things in multiple traditions. One such tradition is: *"You are not really brethren, nor are you connected with each other the way we would like until you can put your hands into the money-pouch of your brother (or sister), and take money when you need it, and then put the money back when you no longer need it."* [12]

GETTING IT RIGHT

Based on the above text, it is clear that not all charitable efforts are truly charitable. Another case study of this can be seen when the Red Cross failed in their efforts toward Haiti:

> *In late 2011, the Red Cross launched a multimillion-dollar project to transform the desperately poor area, which was hit hard by the earthquake that struck Haiti the year before. The main focus of that project—called LAMIKA, an acronym in Creole for "A Better Life in My Neighborhood"—was building hundreds of permanent homes. However, [as of 2015], not one home has been built in Campeche. Many residents live in shacks made of rusty sheet metal, without access to drinkable water, electricity, or basic sanitation. When it rains, their homes flood and residents bail out mud and water. The Red Cross received an outpouring of donations after the quake—nearly half a billion dollars. The group publicly celebrated its work; but in fact, the Red Cross repeatedly failed on the ground in Haiti. Confidential memos, emails from worried top officers, and accounts of a dozen frustrated and disappointed insiders show how the charity broke promises, squandered donations, and made dubious claims of success...The Red Cross says it has provided homes to more than 130,000 people. But the actual number of permanent homes the group has built in all of Haiti was six...Carline Noailles, who was the project's manager in Washington, said it was endlessly delayed because the Red Cross "did not have the know-how." Another former official who worked on the Campeche project said: "Everything takes four times as long because it would be micromanaged from DC, and they had no development experience."*[13]

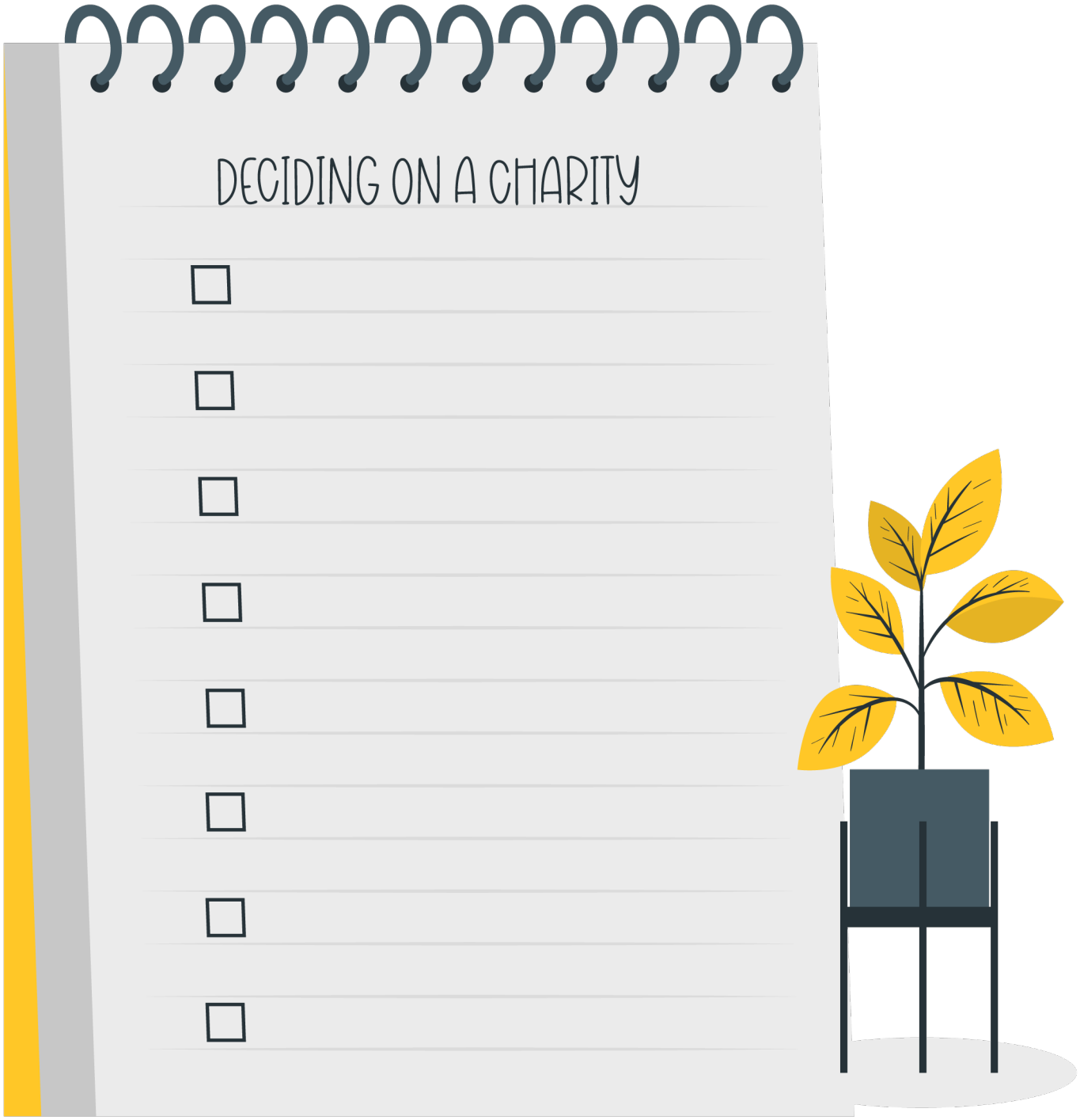
12 *Biḥār* al-*Anwār*, Vol. 74, Pp. 231-232.

13 This excerpt was taken from: https://www.propublica.org/article/how-the-red-cross-raised-half-a-billion-dollars-for-haiti-and-built-6-homes.

Activity 4.2a: Deciding on a Charity

As a group, come up with a checklist that can help you gain insight into whether a particular charity is worth getting involved with or not, and to what extent. What are the questions you would ask the charity organizers?

For example, if the charity is run by Muslims, you could ask: “Is your charity in regular contact with a qualified scholar who can provide an Islamic Perspective in the area you are focusing on?” Or: “What measures do you use to determine whether your efforts are successful?”



Activity 4.2b: Creating a Community Charity

As a class, first identify a list of pressing community needs. Then discuss potential community service projects that could meet these needs. Now, divide into groups. Each group will design a plan for the project. The plan should be realistic and actionable. It should reflect—from the beginning to the end—the essence of true charity. This should be evident in all aspects, such as the way people are chosen to assume responsibility, the type of communication that is done, how the recipients of the community project are chosen, and how the successes or failures of the effort are evaluated. Keep in mind that charity does not necessarily mean that you have to distribute material items. Charity can also be a service, such as providing education or skills to people.

Answer the following questions to create your presentation:

1. What community needs (such as: hunger, illiteracy, etc.) are you trying to address?

2. Why is it important to address this particular need?

3. Describe your charity. Why is it important?

4. Explain how you will:

a. Advertise to collect funds.

b. Fundraise for the charity.

c. Recruit volunteers to help out.

d. Distribute your charitable items/services to those in need.

e. Monitor your donations to ensure that they are being used in the correct manner.

f. Publicize the results so that others can be aware of the outcome.

g. Evaluate the success or failures of your efforts.

4.3 Recreation

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Explain how Islam views recreation and how it benefits us in our overall life.
- Analyze how our culture approaches the issue of recreation.
- Look at some merits and demerits of recreation.
- Examine how to properly place recreation into their lives.

Activity 4.3a: Quick Write

Quickly write five positive things about recreation, and five negative things about recreation.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
1.	**1.**
2.	**2.**
3.	**3.**
4.	**4.**
5.	**5.**

Activity 4.3b: Debate

1. The class will be divided into two groups:
   - **a.** Group 1 will defend each statement (mentioned below) in the affirmative; i.e. "I agree with the statement because…"
   - **b.** Group 2 will argue against each statement (mentioned below) in the negative; i.e. " I disagree with the statement because…"

2. You will have 20 minutes in your group to develop the arguments. You must use the statements provided below, and develop well-articulated affirmative or negative arguments. You will be assessed on your ability to make clear justifications, use information from prior classes, and speak clearly and persuasively.
   - **a.** Write out bullet points for the main evidence for each statement.
   - **b.** Both groups should appoint a different person from the group to argue for each statement. Thus, there will be a total of four presenters in the debate from each group, so eight different presenters in total.

3. As each group is presenting, write down some notes about the strength of each group's argument—even if it is against your group's position.

STATEMENT	GROUP ___: I _____ WITH THIS STATEMENT
As long as homework and other obligations are taken care of (such as prayers and the necessary chores), teenagers should be able to use their smartphones as much as they want to on the weeknights and weekends.	
Middle and high schools should only focus on academic subjects. Sports and creative arts should be removed from their curriculum.	
Watching any kind of professional sports is a complete waste of time.	
Watching any television shows or movies are okay if they are PG-13, and you are 13 years old or older than that.	

4. Begin the debate.
   a. STATEMENT 1: 5 minutes pro, 5 minutes against
   b. STATEMENT 2: 5 minutes pro, 5 minutes against
   c. STATEMENT 3: 5 minutes pro, 5 minutes against
   d. STATEMENT 4: 5 minutes pro, 5 minutes against

Post-Debate Reflection:

1. Which side do you personally agree with regarding each of the statements in the above debate? Explain your decisions.

Imām al-Kāẓim ﷺ said in a profound *ḥadīth*: "Try to divide your time into four parts:

1. A portion for supplicating and conversing with Allah.
2. A portion for seeking a (righteous) livelihood.
3. A portion for associating with brethren and trustworthy people who point out your defects and treat you sincerely in secret.
4. A portion for your legitimate and permissible pleasures. Through this portion, you will be able to accomplish the other three parts."[1]

STOP AND REFLECT: How can we apply this narration to our daily lives? What activities and hobbies fall under "relaxation" (which is the fourth element in this *ḥadīth*)?

We may have heard this narration before and thought that the four categories need to be spaced out exactly evenly throughout each day. However, this is not correct; rather, we should try to have this overall approach/balance in our lives. For example, on the weekends, we may spend less hours working or doing school homework, but this does not mean that we should not do any work or anything to better ourselves on the weekend. During summer vacation or other holidays, we can try to spend more of our time helping our family at home since we have less school work to do. These different elements of our days contain layered meanings, as we each have different responsibilities in our lives to fulfill. Each of these four aspects are meant to bring us closer to Allah ﷻ.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think recreation is essential to one's well-being?

This *ḥadīth* of the 7th Imām ﷺ teaches us that entertainment and recreation can also have a purpose, and bring us closer to Allah ﷻ if it is the right kind of enjoyment. Our entertainment should first and foremost be permissible *(ḥalāl)*; and beyond this, let us ask ourselves: *"How can my entertainment be useful to me?"* Examples of beneficial past-times can include: sports that help us maintain our health and/or become stronger, recreational activities that give us down time in order to energize, trips outside to see the beautiful nature, board games that enhance our minds, or social activities that bring us closer to those around us. If, for example, we play soccer as a sport for recreation with the purpose to get closer to Allah ﷻ, then we will not let it get in the way of our obligations *(wājibāt)*, like prayers *(ṣalāh)* or fasting *(ṣawm)*. If we are partaking in recreation for the sake of Allah ﷻ, then we will try to do the right amount to keep us rested and energized for the other portions of our day.

Beyond this, we should also be selective about the forms of enjoyment that we choose. For example, entertainment that involves technology, such as movies, shows, and video games, tend to be 'lower forms' of entertainment, in the sense that if you are consuming this kind of media, then you should try to limit the amount of time and be vigilant about the content you are engaging in. Over time, it is best if you continue to question what type of entertainment you are consuming and for what purpose.

1 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, Vol. 1, P. 409.

In your assigned homework, you will read passages about different types of entertainment, and answer questions to help you gauge your understanding of the purpose of these means of recreational activities.

Activity 4.3c: Scheduling Your Time

Make a schedule for tomorrow, or an average day fitting in all of the above categories (rest, school, time for Allah ﷻ, entertainment, etc.)

TIME	ACTIVITY

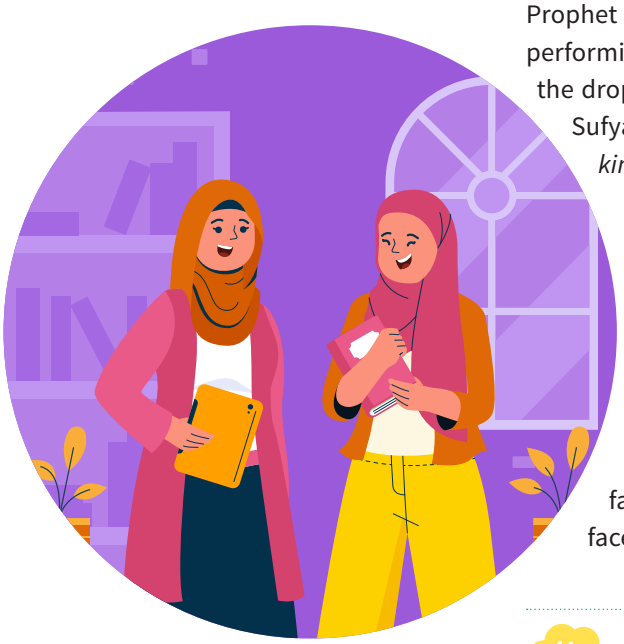
The following paragraphs are edited excerpts from speeches and scholarly writings on the topic of recreation and entertainment. Read the paragraphs, then respond to the focus questions following each passage.

PASSAGE 1:[2] SOCIALIZING CAN BE A FORM OF WORSHIP

According to Islamic teachings, recreation, entertainment, and entertaining others—making others happy, pleased, and hopeful—are very important. So, when you are involved in an entertainment activity, such as performing a play, telling a funny story, reciting a poem, or holding a competition—with the proper intention, then it is as if you are worshiping Allah ﷻ.

A Happy Social Life at the Time of the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ created a joyous environment for his companions: he would joke with the people, and he used to hold competitions that he himself participated in. Those who lived with him for a decade or so increased the amount of love that they had for the Prophet ﷺ, and their belief in him within their hearts. When he conquered the city of Mecca, Abū Sufyān, secretly with the support of ʿAbbās—the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ—came to his camp to take refuge. In the morning, he saw the Prophet ﷺ performing ablution, and the people gathered around him so that they could collect the droplets of water which were dripping from the Prophet's face and hands! Abū Sufyān then said: *"I have seen Caesar and the Shāh, and the great and powerful kings of the world, but I have not seen such dignity within them."*



A Life of Paradise is a Life with Smiles

One of the most important things—and certainly part of social necessities—is maintaining a smile. Smiling is a necessary need for human existence. Life without smiling and happiness is a type of hell on Earth. A life of Paradise is a life with smiles. Imām ʿAlī ؑ said: *"A true believer keeps a smile on one's face, and keeps one's grief within the heart."* A believer's face smiles and shows happiness, even if they are undergoing intense sorrow within. All faces should be happy. If you can bring joy to your community with your happy face, then you should do it.

STOP AND REFLECT: Reflect upon the following questions based on the content in the above reading passage:

1. When is entertainment a form of worship?
2. How did the Prophet ﷺ make use of entertainment in the city of Medina?

2 This can be found at: https://english.khamenei.ir/news/5080/Planning-recreational-activities-for-people-is-worship-of-God

PASSAGE 2:[3] FUN AND PASTIME IN THE TRUE EXTENT

STOP AND REFLECT: We would like you to meditate deeply on the following questions:

1. What are some examples of a hobby or a pastime?
2. What is the purpose of enjoying ourselves, and fulfilling our instincts like eating, drinking, or being in the company of others?

Sometimes, we might imagine that fulfilling our desires can give us something great. But in reality, when we go to extremes, we can get into problems. For example, someone who is obsessed with food and drink may become foul-smelling, fat, or bloated.

The period of youth represents the strength of a person, establishing responsibilities in life, and is a precious gift. We must not say to them "Ignore your needs and desires," but rather we should say to them "Answer your needs at the level which your body requires, but in a righteous way without any negative effects."

If you choose to pursue empty activities, then there will be boredom and monotony, meaninglessness, and the feeling that you are squandering your life. Open your hearts to Allah ﷻ who created you, and enriched your youthfulness with life and energy, and you will find that opening your hearts in this way will give you more spiritual and physical pleasures, as well as the bounties of life with all the good, beauty, and freedom in its true essence that they contain.

Sports: The Preferred Hobby of Youth

There are some people who consider certain types of sports as a waste of time, and say that the only types of valid sports activity are javelin throwing, horseback-riding, and swimming. This is because of the *aḥādīth* which praise these types of activities for young people. However, these narrations need to be understood in their proper context. At that time, there was a need for the Muslims to be trained in those specific areas. However, in general, anything which strengthens the body, develops the mind, and results in positive benefits in important areas can also be positive.

Sports should not merely be a means to fill empty time. They are a means to develop the body. Having the spirit of sportsmanship is also very important. One should be able to calmly accept defeat, because the competition of sports is not just physical, but it is also mental.

Being a Fan of a Team

There is no problem in being a fan of a team, as long as certain guidelines are observed. The general atmosphere should not become one of hero worship or excess veneration. Also, becoming totally immersed in the games can mean that the youth forget about more important concerns, like what is going on in society, politics, and the culture as a whole. If following sports teams becomes an obsession, then we must object to that.

Unfortunately, many institutions and international organizations of corruption take advantage of this condition to distract youths for their own political agendas. This is what we wish to caution against. We have noted that in some countries like America and Europe, people place such great value on these games that they demand all their attention—to the point where political and social concerns are of lesser concern.

STOP AND REFLECT: Reflect upon the following questions based on the content in this reading passage:

1. What type of recreational activities are meaningful and beneficial? To what extent?
2. To what extent is it appropriate to be a fan of a sports team?

3 This can be found at: https://www.al-islam.org/world-our-youth-sayyid-muhammad-husayn-fadlallah/themes-5-our-youth-shariah-view#sports-preferred-hobby-youth

CHAPTER 5

Media and Entertainment

5.1 Media Literacy

5.1 Media Literacy

OBJECTIVES

WE WILL:

- Define and explain what media literacy is.
- Analyze the type of information we consume through technology and on social media platforms.
- Understand the dangers of living in our 'imagination' and not accepting reality for what it truly is.

MEDIA is a means of communication which reaches and influences widely. It can include TV, video games, apps, internet, music, videos, etc.

Today, literacy extends beyond books, newspapers, and magazines, and includes technological sources of information as well. Oftentimes, these sources can prove to be overwhelming because there is so much content in many different forms—more so than traditional forms of literacy ever offered. As a result, it is essential that we work to critically think about the information we consume through media, and consider why certain content is created, and by whom. In other words, we need to become media literate.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think it is important to have strong media literacy (critical thinking about what media is presenting to you)? What would you say to someone who thinks that what you watch does not affect you?

It is easy to consume media without being thoughtful and critical about what we are watching. We might feel like watching something on television even if we would be uncomfortable watching the same thing in real-life. This can include content that is extremely violent, graphic, or indecent. For example, we would not go to forbidden *(ḥarām)* gatherings, or be in an impermissible *(ḥarām)* relationship, but we might view such things on TV shows or movies without even thinking about what we are taking in.

How can we become more literate about what we are watching? We know that we should try to do everything in our lives with a proper intention, and the hope to get closer to Allah ﷻ, including what we choose to do for fun. The purpose of entertainment in our lives should be to relax in order to do our other responsibilities while we are well-rested. But it should never take us away from Allah ﷻ.

Let us take a look at some verses and narrations about how what we see and hear affects us.

حَتَّى إِذا ما جاؤُها شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَ أَبْصارُهُمْ وَ جُلُودُهُمْ بِما كانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Until when they come to it [the Fire], their hearing and their sight and their skins will bear witness against them, concerning what they used to do." [1]

STOP AND REFLECT: According to this verse, what are three parts of the body that can be misused in a way that will lead someone to the Fire of the Hereafter? What are some examples of ways that each of them can be misused?

1 Noble Qur'ān, Sūrah Fuṣṣilat (41), Verse 20.

وَ الْعَيْنُ جَاسُوسُ الْقَلْبِ وَ بَرِيدُ الْعَقْل

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"The eye is the spy of the heart, and the messenger of the mind (intellect)."* [2]

STOP AND REFLECT: What do you think it means for the eye to be a spy for the heart, and a messenger of the intellect? Hint: What kind of messages can the eyes bring to a person?

Our intellect *(ʿaql)* is the key to our thinking, and thus how we make our decisions, which translates to our actions. Whatever we see influences what we do.

الْقَلْبُ مُصْحَفُ الْبَصَر

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"The heart is a record-book (muṣḥaf) for the eye."* [3]

According to these narrations, whatever our eyes see will direct the intellect and our center of emotions. Whatever we see directly influences our mind (what we think), and it affects our heart (what we feel). Therefore, we should be very careful about what we choose to watch.

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

Allah ﷻ has blessed us with the power of imagination. Imagining is a tool for understanding parts of reality that we cannot see. There is a difference between *"tafakkur"* (thought) and *"takhayyul"* (imagination) in that when *takhayyul* (imagination) is used for *tafakkur* (thought), then it is positive. Imagination—when used for the sake of imagination—might be good for young children; but as you get older, living in an imaginary world is not useful or beneficial.

When imagination takes over someone's mind, they become less able to deal with reality.

Reality has ups and downs, sweet times and bitter times, life and death, limited resources, and consequences for our actions. Embracing reality for what it is helps us to live our lives in a fulfilling manner, and prepares us better for the Hereafter.

2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 101, P. 41.
3 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, P. 13.

Activity 5.1a: Jigsaw!

Each student will receive one verse *(āyah)* or narration *(ḥadīth)* to read and reflect on for 5 minutes.

1. **5 minutes:** Read your *āyah/ḥadīth* and write down one or two points of reflection, and one question that arises for you.

2. **3 minutes:** Find all the other students in your class who were given the same *āyah/ḥadīth*—this is now your research group! Once you are in your group, each student will have a different role: Discussion leader, recorder (the one who takes notes), researcher (one who will go through everyone's notes and summarize them), and a presenter.

3. **15 minutes:** With your research group, reread the *āyah/ḥadīth* and discuss ideas, thoughts, and questions. As a group, come up with three key points that the presenter can share with the class in order to teach them about your *āyah/ḥadīth.*

Students will be given a handout with one of the following āyah/ḥadīth

Āyah #1:

"People's accounting [of their deeds] will happen soon. But they are in a state of heedlessness (ghaflah) and are unaware. Whenever a new reminder [from the Qurʾān] comes to them, they listen to it as they play around. Their hearts are filled with lahw (distractions and lowly things)." [4]

Note: Some of the characteristics of something that is *lahw* are:

- It makes you occupied and distracts you from something else.
- What you are distracted from is more important than the distraction that you are engaged in.
- The distraction is done in a subconscious way.

Ḥadīth #1:

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"There is nothing in the body more ungrateful than the eye. Do not give it what it asks for, or else it will distract you from remembering Allah, the Exalted."* [5]

Ḥadīth #2:

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ said: *"Every glance in which there is no learning or contemplation is lahw (a distraction or lowly thing)."* [6]

Ḥadīth #3:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"Keep away from looking at what you should not (look at)! Doing so (looking at the impermissible) will plant the seeds of lower desires and give birth to heedlessness!"* [7]

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verses 2-4.
5 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khisāl*, Vol. 2, P. 610.
6 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 75, P. 92.
7 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 101, P. 42.

Action Plan:

After learning about the *aḥādīth* and *āyah* above, what are some actions that you can incorporate into your daily life to embrace reality for what it is?

SACREDNESS OF READING BOOKS

In Islam, there is a sacredness that is associated with learning in person. All learning—online or otherwise—is highly encouraged; however, in person learning is considered to be the most effective because this kind of learning goes beyond simply the transfer of knowledge. This process of learning involves interaction and observation—which are two key factors in the learning process.

In addition to learning directly from someone, reading is also highly encouraged as you are able to interact with the text, ask questions, and truly learn to exemplify the information presented by an expert author.

This is not to say that other forms of learning, such as listening to a speech or learning through technology, are not helpful. However, they often result in living on your own analysis of materials, while Islamic tradition emphasizes learning through qualified scholars and people who are experts in their field.

The medium of a book is more prone to appeal to the intellect than visual media. A scholar who is an expert on Islamic family matters states the following: "Reading is a competitor to [negative] media. However much a family becomes more tuned to the media, they will distance themselves from the culture of reading. The more they read, the less media they will use."[8]

Regarding the importance of reading and what we should read, a respected scholar, and *marjaʿ*, Āyatullāh Khamenei states: "Certain people are used to reading books, but books that do not require thinking. Nothing is wrong with this. After all, this is a kind of reading. I would not deny this, but it is better to combine recreational reading—like reading novels, autobiographies, and easy historical books—with reading 'serious' books, books that require thinking and careful studying."[9]

What we read must be chosen carefully. A lot of reading material is not suitable, and as one gets older, it is more likely that the books advertised for a certain age group may contain inappropriate content. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"A (true) believer is like a bee—who eats from something pure—then gives something pure."*[10]

8 Ustād ʿAbbāsi, *Man-e Dīgare Mā.*
9 Āyatullāh Khamenei.
10 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 61, P. 238.

IMPORTANCE OF MEETING IN-PERSON

STOP AND REFLECT: What are a few advantages of meeting someone in-person, as opposed to chatting with them online?

As mentioned above, there is a sacredness to being around scholars and learning directly from teachers in-person. Similarly, speaking to people in-person has a sacredness that speaking to people online does not. Of course, it is very important to keep in touch with family and good friends who do not live near us, but visiting people in-person is much better. Naturally, we understand this, as we know that even if we talk to someone everyday on the phone, we still miss them and feel excited when we are able to meet them in-person.

MEDIA AND FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

In previous lessons, we mentioned the importance of identifying the sources of anxiety and depression in order to remove these conditions over time. In the section above, we also discussed the importance of in-person meetings versus online because it does not have the same effect on us. Similarly, whenever we consume media, we should reflect on how it affects us.

When we watch a television show, a movie, or some YouTube video, or other clip, we should pay attention to how we feel after we are done. Sometimes, we immediately get the feeling that we spent too much time looking at our screen. The next question we should ask ourselves is: Was this because of the **time** we spent watching, or the **content** that we were watching, or **both**? This can help us decide whether or not to watch something similar in the future.

STOP AND REFLECT: How do you feel after having too much "screen time" (i.e. watching too many episodes of a show all at once, or just scrolling the internet to "waste some time")?

Oftentimes, when we watch a lot of small, curated clips, (such as on: Tiktok, Instagram, YouTube, etc.), we are actually being advertised to money-making engines that have very powerful algorithms. We might get a distorted view of life that causes us to get feelings of depression. For example, if a lot of the videos that are coming up on our feed talk about wanting something new, or doing a new trend with friends, we might feel bad if our life does not or cannot incorporate that particular thing. We might be shown something as simple as a montage of beautiful pictures that have been put together, but our own photo gallery may not have that many nice photos, so we feel sad. We have to remember that social media influencers will spend hours looking at their photos, making sure they take photos every time they go out, and putting them together in a way that influences you in under a minute. Social media is moving in this direction of posting more clips and short moments because they know it makes us want to come back to see more.

The Influence of Social Media

In June 2019, Kirsten Muller-Vahl, a psychiatrist at Hannover Medical School in Germany, was faced with an influx of patients experiencing a complex form of tics. All the patients had been diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome.[11] However, Muller-Vahl's professional opinion was that these tics were entirely related to something else. After much research and discussion, they learned that all of the patients who had been admitted possessed identical symptoms to a famous YouTuber, Jan Zimmerman, who the majority of those hospitalized said they often watched. Despite the patient symptoms all being similar and coming up over and over as Tourette's symptoms usually do, they were far from what classic tics manifested as. These patients were instead demonstrating symptoms of Functional Movement Disorder (FMD), a disorder with no neurological basis, but a psychological one. For some patients, simply learning that they did not actually have Tourette's Syndrome stopped their symptoms, while others required a course of psychotherapy. This was the first case of a mass sociogenic illness, or social virus, that resulted through the use of social media, in this case, YouTube videos. This wide spectrum of symptoms has spread through social mimicry, and although there have been cases of this in single schools or communities, scientists are concerned that these will now be much more widespread due to the wide access that people have to social media and screens. Since 2019, multiple clinics nationwide have reported drastic increases in patients presenting tic-like symptoms, even in women, despite much scientific research showing that boys are much more likely to be diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome. Much of this is due to TikTok becoming a safe haven for people with Tourette's to discuss their symptoms and feel like part of a larger community. These "tics" have even been nicknamed "TikTok tics" due to the sheer number of individuals who have developed the symptoms through social mimicry.

11 Tourette's Syndrome (TS) is a condition of the nervous system. TS causes people to have "tics" which are sudden twitches, movements, or sounds that people do repeatedly. People who have these tics cannot stop their body from doing certain things.

PRACTICING GOOD INTERNET HYGIENE

We have talked about having good media literacy skills when it comes to what we watch, but it is also important to pay attention to what we post online. When it comes to posting things on social media or on the internet, first and foremost, we should remember that the rules of Islam must still be adhered to—even online.

It is also important to remember that **everything** we put on the internet is actually saved somewhere. Even websites and social media where they 'claim' the pictures disappear, the information is still stored somewhere. As time goes on, we start to put more and more on our digital footprint, which is our trail of online activity.

STOP AND REFLECT: Why do you think it is called a digital footprint? What happens when you walk and leave footprints behind?

Whenever we use the internet to post anything, it is stored somewhere, even if we are sending it privately or have a private account. Having a private account is at least good in the way that what we post is not searchable on Google, but even a private account can be hacked. If your account is public, anyone can find what you have posted. Even deleting the posts might not fully get rid of the information, as sometimes Google will still store things. Your digital footprint will always lead back to you and it is permanent! It can never truly be deleted. This is why we should always be thoughtful and very careful about what we post online.

Tips for Good Internet Hygiene

- **Do Not Post Everything:** Be careful not to post everything about your life, even if you are using a private account. You should especially avoid posting your personal information, like your address or phone number.
- **Post Thoughtfully:** Whenever you post something on social media, think about what purpose you are posting that thing for. Then, ask yourself how you would feel if you could never take down your post in the future.
- **Clear Cookies:** Cookies are what give advertisers the ability to track what else you are doing on the internet, and continue to advertise to you.
- **Avoid People You Do Not Know:** Never share any personal information with strangers, and avoid discussing things on social media publicly, even if your account does not have your name on it.

Tips for Better Media Literacy

- **Read Together:** Suggest having reading time for your whole family in order to have a balanced exposure to different types of media.
- **Read to Unwind:** Before you go to sleep, read the Qurʾān or another book, as this is a good way to let your eyes have less exposure to blue light, and this will help you sleep better as well.
- **Control Media Exposure:** Do not let it control you!
- **Delay Having Your Own Devices:** There is no need to own your own device until absolutely necessary. When someone else owns it, or it is a shared entity, then it will help you be more responsible about how you use it. Similarly, there is no need for excess devices.
- **Pay Attention to What You Search:** Take special care when using search engines, or when just randomly browsing recommendations.
- **Be Aware:** Pay attention to the negative effects of media on ourselves as individuals, and in fulfilling our responsibilities toward our families.

Activity 5.1b: Review Questions

1. Media Literacy means:

   a. Thinking critically about who we talk to in-person.
   b. Thinking critically about what you watch, read, and listen to.
   c. Thinking critically about what we post on social media.
   d. B and C

2. The best way to gain knowledge is:

   a. In-person from a teacher.
   b. Through reading.
   c. Through watching documentaries.
   d. Through searching the internet.

3. Your digital footprint is permanent:

   a. True
   b. False

4. If you post something online, but you use a fake name, then no one will know it is actually you:

   a. True
   b. False

5. If you send a disappearing message or picture, it disappears forever:

   a. True
   b. False

Activity 5.1c: My Media Habits

Answer the following questions about your media habits. You do not need to share these with anyone.

1. How often do you watch shows? How much time do you spend watching them?

   a. What goals, if any, do you have for how much time you want to spend watching shows?

2. How often do you watch movies? How much time do you spend watching them?

   a. What goals, if any, do you have for how much time you want to spend watching movies?

3. How often do you scroll through videos on different platforms (such as Instagram, Tiktok, etc.)?

a. What goals, if any, do you have for how much time you want to spend watching such videos?

4. Are there any shows or movies that you think you should stop watching, or you should not watch again? If so, which ones?

5. Are you on social media? What accounts do you have?

a. How much time do you spend on social media?

b. Are your posts public?

c. Do you use your real name?

d. Do you talk to people whom you do not know on social media? Do you share anything too personal?

6. What are your goals for how much time you spend on social media?

7. What do you want to change about how you use social media to make yourself more secure online?

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